

LOVECRAFT STUDIES 17



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Comments from the Publisher

By Marc A. Michaud

At least daily, somewhere in the country, if you pick up a newspaper, amidst the politics, sports, and business headlines, it's possible to find some report of occult-related crime. I'm not sure whether there's more of this going on lately, or whether it's just being reported more--nonetheless, it is a serious and sad statement on this country that people are so despondent that they must turn to this often negative and violent form of belief. I'm not one to say what anyone should believe--just that when a form of "religion", be it occult, Christian, Judaic, and so on, practices violence, then we should all speak out and let our views be known. What does all this have to do with HPL? I fear that in the not-too-distant future this movement could affect us all: with Lovecraft and weird fiction being dragged into it, and our freedom of expression could be threatened.

For as many years as I've been a publisher of weird fiction, I'm amazed at how many letters and phone calls I've gotten regarding the *Necronomicon*--not as to its origins, but as to where a copy can be obtained. (Perhaps it's my own fault, naming my press after the most-famous non-existent book in history.) While many of these queries are from teenagers who are taken in by HPL's vivid descriptions, and who also accept that it is all fiction once this is explained to them, there are those who cannot accept the fact that the *Necronomicon*, Cthulhu, etc., do not exist. These are the people who scare me.

Even scarier is that one Saturday evening last winter I received a call from a young man in Long Island, with the gist of his opening statement being: "My friend and I are performing a ritual tonight and we weren't sure which incantation from the *Necronomicon* we should use . . ." He was flabbergasted when I said that the book and spells were all fictitious; someone he knew had actually seen the *Necronomicon*! I couldn't help him, and was bothered for several days, wondering what exactly this ritual was . . . did it involve someone's little sister, or even a pet hamster?

I'm sure that there are some occultists reading this piece, fuming over the fact that I haven't mentioned that not all cults practice violence--this is true; now I've mentioned it; and if this isn't disturbing you yet, read on.

I recently got hold of a copy of a brochure put out by a group calling themselves the "Esoteric Order of Dagon". This group is not to be confused with the EOD formed fifteen years ago by some well-meaning fans and scholars whose primary interest was and is (for the most part) a better understanding of HPL and weird fiction. This new "EOD" is either having the biggest laugh on us, or is a frightening group of clowns. Unfortunately, I suspect the latter. I quote:

Initiates of the Esoteric Order of Dagon are those individuals who recognise and acknowledge the hidden mysteries concealed in Lovecraft's weird fiction. They are not bound or limited to any of the particular traditions described in his writings. These include Thelema (The *Necronomicon*), Sex Magick ("The Thing on the Doorstep"), . . . Skyering in the Aethyr ("The Haunter of the Dark"), Alchemy ("The Case of Charles Dexter Ward") and many others. Members synthesize all of these various practices and methods after personally verifying and adapting them. He or she

rejects any Order's claim that only it is legitimate and can provide access to Gnosis. The individual's own True Will is the real authorized personal representative [sic] of the Only True Order.

Of HPL they tell us:

Lovecraft suffered from an acute inferiority complex which prevented him from personally crossing the Abyss in his lifetime. He remained a withdrawn and lonely writer who retained a rational, sceptical view of the universe, despite the the [sic] glimpses of places and entities beyond the world of mundane reality which his dream-experiences allowed him. He never learned the true origin of the tremendous vistas of cosmic strangeness that haunted his dreams. He never realized that he was himself the High Priest "Ech-Pi-El", the Prophet of the coming Aeon of Cthulhu.

I'll be the first one to admit that these bozos have every right to say what they want; admittedly they don't promote violence in this particular booklet, but, if nothing else, their sheer stupidity helps to blacken the name of HPL.

In regard to self-abuse, the following quote sheds light on how this Oregon-based group came to be the way they are:

The Fear, Loathing & Paranoia juice can be alchemically transformed into psychoactive compounds (adrenochrome, related to mescaline) for intense dream (nightmare) work. The important and significant aspect of this glory in the horrific, scarey, & alien nature of extra-terrestrial/trans-dimensional contact/comunion symbiosis-&-metamorphosis is that this is the outward, common interpretation which, with it's reclusive [sic]/forbidding mask, keeps the merely curious dabblers outside the Lion-Serpent Gate of the Abyss and this fear of Initiation [sic] acts as a [sic] insurmountable barrier to those unprepared and unwilling to transcend the "ugliness" of the necessary transformation to be undergone.

Hell, I'd have funny dreams too!

Ironically, after making the above statement, they follow it up with:

Of course it also attracts many dangerous psychopaths for the same reason, (as with Crowley's Work), [sic] who are destroyed by their own stupidity when they release the forces of the Elder Gods. It is a dangerous undertaking and not for everyone.

What's the expression? . . . "The stove calling the kettle black."

All this scares me. Currently, all the occult-related crimes seem to be associated with "Dungeons and Dragons" or heavy-metal music, with the absurd outcome being pressure-groups trying to ban these supposed causes. While that's no solution, it won't surprise me if HPL's name or the *Necronomicon* show up implicated in one of these crimes, and those pressure-groups start looking at us as the cause. While I firmly believe that they can't suppress us, the fact that we will be associated with these looney criminals will definitely hurt *our* movement to bring Lovecraft and weird fiction out from the ghetto.

I'm not sure what we can do about this problem. One thing I do know is that we don't have to support these people, with their phony books and spells. It may be 1988, but 1984 is creeping up on us from all directions--have things gone so far that people need to escape that badly? I've no solutions, but we musn't ignore this problem either.

Randolph Carter: An Anti-Hero's Quest (part 2)

By Norman Gayford

Out of an intriguing correspondence between Lovecraft and E. Hoffmann Price an initially hesitant collaborative project arose; it culminated in "Through the Gates of the Silver Key", the final Randolph Carter story. Price prodded Lovecraft quite thoroughly before the latter agreed to take up pen, but it is reasonable to assume that Lovecraft would not have involved himself with the collaboration had he not seen literary merit beyond the sheer whimsy of it. Still, credit is due to Price for initiating the project.

The tale welds Carter into the eternal wheel of rebirth, a mythic pattern oft discussed by Mircea Eliade. As it develops, the correspondence regarding the collaboration reveals much about Lovecraft's involvement with Randolph Carter and the necessity of wrapping up the Carter cycle. This correspondence runs from October 3, 1932, to December 3, 1936.

Though they had corresponded for some time, Price and Lovecraft met for the first time in New Orleans in June 1932, as Lovecraft was engaging in one of his bursts of extended travel. On that evening Price expressed his admiration of Lovecraft's "Silver Key" and was toying with the idea of a sequel

to account for Randolph Carter's doings after his disappearance. My interest in his story stimulated him, and his appreciative response in turn stimulated me, so that before the session was over, we had seriously resolved to undertake the task. Some months later I wrote a six thousand word first draft. . . . HPL courteously applauded; and then literally took pen in hand. He mailed me a 14,000 word elaboration, in the Lovecraft manner, of what I had sent to him.¹

Between the visit and the Lovecraft-revised sequel, much correspondence took place. Upon receipt of the sequel, Lovecraft wrote:

Needless to say, I perused your Randolph Carter sequel with keenest interest, pleasure, & appreciation. You certainly have a splendid conception there, & I profoundly hope we can get it into publishable shape sooner or later. It would be unfair to the idea to try to handle it now--amidst my desperate rush of previous work--but before long I trust I can give it the leisurely consideration it deserves. Of course, in the end I may have to echo your confession of being buffaloed--but I'll have a try first. Just now I can hardly predict what I'll try to do--but I fancy the changes may (if you don't mind) be quite considerable. In the first place, the style ought perhaps to be less unlike that of "The Silver Key". Secondly, in describing Carter's exit from the world of reality the fact that he has returned to a boyhood stage ought to be allowed for. Third--the

1. E. Hoffmann Price, "The Man Who Was Lovecraft", in *Something about Cats and Other Pieces*, ed. August Derleth (Sauk City, WI: Arkham House, 1949), pp. 278-82.

transition, and the entrance to the world of illusion ought to be *infinitely subtilised*. There must be no abrupt entry to a tangible and describable vault inside the hill, but rather a vague atomic filtration into a world hardly describable in terms of matter. The Presence ought to be less conclusively anthropomorphic, and there ought to be much less prosaic clear-cutness about the interchange of speech or thought betwixt Carter and the Presence.²

Lovecraft found something intriguing in Price's notion that "Time is a symptom, not a cause. That space is multi-dimensional, and that our space is but the section of a super-space."³ Ambiguity, rather than literalization or positivism, is critical to Lovecraft, however. He continues:

Whether we had better introduce any new elements connected with Carter's exposure to forbidden gulfs of cosmic geometry remains to be seen. The action as you have it ought certainly to be preserved in essentials. And right here two problems come up. First--how to get the ideas to the reader without introducing the element of concrete-sounding dialogue . . . and second, how to avoid the impression of lecture-room didacticism.⁴

Lovecraft was swamped with correspondence, as Joshi and others have pointed out. Still, he seemed hesitant about tackling the sequel, his enthusiasm notwithstanding. It is as if he knew the ramifications of the fifth tale but was not entirely certain how to take them on.

Hell, but it'll be a tough nut to crack! I admit that I may not be equal to it, but when I get the leisure I'll do what I can. . . . It'll be a ticklish job--that's why I don't want to attempt it till I can give it undivided attention under favourable conditions. But let me repeat how much I enjoyed reading the tale. It was a delight to see the dimensional principle so adroitly handled . . . & there is vast cleverness in the way you have Carter return. Even if we can't fix it up for publication it will certainly not have been written in vain.⁵

Answering the letter seven days later, Price made it clear that he had no conception of the size to which the project would grow.

As to Randolph Carter: your comment is flattering, and unmerited. The conception is good, I believe; but for reasons I mentioned, I lack the temperament, finesse, or something of the sort to put it across.

Your suggestions click with me. I agree with them, one and all. The ideas you say are necessary are the very ones that I would flop miserably: yet I recognize them as the very things which you can write in a masterly way. If the presence would logically draw its scimitar and challenge Carter to a duel, I could do it flamingly and magnificently, and have Carter win the fight! But alas . . .⁶

That last point is important in our thinking of Carter as a flawed anti-hero. Price would have a sword fight take place, but he knows that this is most inappropriate for the character and the ideas within the cycle. Only once have we seen Carter with a scimitar, and then he lost it to a night-gaunt. Lovecraft is on a stylistic plane above this. Price knows this and continues:

If you enjoyed reading that crude sketch of a subject that had me so baffled, I'm very glad that I did it. If you like it, it must be worthwhile, for you would instinctively flare up against any

2. Lovecraft to Price, 3 October 1932, H. P. Lovecraft Papers, John Hay Library, Providence. All letters mentioned hereinafter are part of the H. P. Lovecraft Papers collection at the John Hay. I am indebted to the librarians for their painstaking attention during my research.

3. Price to Lovecraft, 30 August 1932.

4. Lovecraft to Price, 3 October 1932.

5. Lovecraft to Price, 3 October 1932.

6. Price to Lovecraft, 10 October 1932.

blasphemy of the Randolph Carter theme you have handled in your stories. You would be more severe in criticizing an original creation, though perhaps not consciously. So if you enjoyed the view, it must be basically true to its background, and worth our continued work.

You will in all probability lengthen it considerably. It is now 6000 words. Two days or three should enable you to add your touch. A couple of days for my whack at your revision, if such be in order. Length will probably be 8000 or 9000 when you add your points. I believe that it will be long enough to make fair salary for both of us. I do not demand an exorbitant rate for my two days work on the ms. Any rate . . . what seems fair to you will be good for me . . .

Thanks for good wishes, and hope to see, in time, your hammering at Lord of Illusion, R. Carter.⁷

Price expected the project to be quick, small, and modestly fruitful. After receiving that letter, Lovecraft wrote a postcard assuring Price of his interest in October 1932. After another ten days, Lovecraft wrote again, as if to underscore his interest.

About Randolph Carter--as I said before, I hope you're in no hurry, because the thing must be done under reposeful conditions if at all. I may flop miserably--but if I feel myself flopping too badly, I'll send the whole works to Klarkash-Ton . . . see what a third hand can do.⁸

Lovecraft wants to take care with the project. Four days later Price assures Lovecraft and says: "No hurry about Carter. I'm plenty busy. As long as you think you can and want to collaborate, take your time."⁹

Lovecraft's ambivalence continued. He penned a postcard which read: "I am hoping to get at Randolph Carter before many more weeks fly past--but hades, what a turmoil of work I am in!"¹⁰ He wrote again, giving Price advice about how to handle criticism. "I'm still looking forward to the time when I can tackle my old friend Randolph Carter again," he wrote, as if more certain.¹¹

Price affects nonchalance.

I have your letter and will take it point by point. . . . 9th--R. Carter . . . no hurry. Any old time. My interest in that has been previously explained: contains a pet idea I would like to see in print, and humors a whim.¹²

Clearly, Price did not realize the mythic significance the tale would have, nor did he probably care. He was toying with an idea. Their December correspondence gave the issue a rest.

Come January, Price intensified his prodding. Possibly he was anxious.

By the way--and I trust that you will not consider this as any urge to disturb your routine and the orderly formation of your thoughts--but have you anything to offer regarding Randolph Carter? As I said, I have "written it off". It is no longer on my schedule; but I am interested, though I would by no means wish to give it undue emphasis by mentioning the work. If, however, you have anything worked up, I'll be glad to type it, or collaborate, or in any way at all cooperate in finishing the job.

And, if after mature deliberation you feel that it is a forced effort, this task of grafting my whim to your established Carter legend, I will by no means feel put out by its being abandoned. I want you to feel absolutely unhampered by any considerations other than your own desire, and whatever sympathy you may have with the work. I'd rather you didn't attempt to force the issue, as a forced effort wastes valuable time--and I do not presume to think that my whim deserves the waste of any time save my own! Yet, if you still fancy the notion, or any of the concepts therein

7. Price to Lovecraft, 10 October 1932.

8. Lovecraft to Price, 20 October 1932.

9. Price to Lovecraft, 24 October 1932.

10. Lovecraft to Price, 18 November 1932.

11. Lovecraft to Price, 22 November 1932.

12. Price to Lovecraft, 26 November 1932.

outlined, I will be glad to do any typing, or revising that you may want so that you can regard it in the form of typed sheets, ready for a final reading, and further criticism if necessary. I'm in no hurry--please don't misunderstand me--it is just that I am interested in those conceptions of time and space.¹³

Lovecraft's response, after a lengthy position statement on the artist which may have been a gentle admonishment of his young would-be collaborator, is increasingly positive about the Carter material.

As for our friend Randolph Carter--just as I said before, I am anxiously awaiting a period free & unworried enough to let me tackle him in proper fashion. All the autumn & winter so far, the pressure of various events has been quite devastating; but I am hoping to get things somewhat under control within a month at least. Then I shall take a whack at Brother Randolph--& if I feel that I'm not doing him justice, shall turn my attempt (together with your original) over to Klarkash-Ton. . . . But I fancy I won't need to call in further aid--we'll see when the time comes. You'll certainly see the result before you set sail for the shadowy steppes of distant Muscovy!¹⁴

In March 1933 Price asserted the necessity of a writer like Lovecraft in the genre. He referred to Carter as a character unique to Lovecraft, but he also urged Lovecraft to become a bit more pulpish for the sake of more consistent sales.¹⁵ Perhaps spurred by this latest prod, Lovecraft reported:

Just before the recent avalanche of work I tackled the Silver Key sequel, & produced 7½ pages . . . --setting the scene at a meeting of Carter's executors in New Orleans & carrying the stranger's narrative as far as Carter's entrance to the inner cave & figurative application of the Key to the vague suggestion of a door at the further end. In these pages I have, I think, ironed out all the discrepancies betwixt the sequel & the original story, & paved the way for the . . . development of the rest. You may complain that I've been rather ruthless in making changes--but the . . . necessity was to reconcile the thing with what cannot be altered because of being in print. And anyway, you have a subsequent chance to remove anything which you don't like. The other parts--involving mathematical concepts . . . will adhere more closely to your plan--although with your permission I may give Carter's ultra-dimensional experiences a more abstract and nebulous cast than in your MS. We shall see. I plan to continue as soon as I can get enough time to give the matter the unhurried attention it deserves.¹⁶

By April 6 he could report:

At last! Gawd, what a job! I suppose you'll be disappointed, but this is really the best I can do. Of course, this is only a first draught in the largest sense. If I've raised hell with your idea, just slash & alter it to fit, & let me see the result. . . . I done me duty!¹⁷

He then goes into the specifics of the revision. These specifics make clear Lovecraft's raising of the Carter quest to the level of myth (as it is explained by Campbell and Eliade), though he is particularly self-effacing.

First, the facts, character of Carter and general tone had to be reconciled with "The Silver Key". Re-read the latter (which I enclose) & see why certain changes had to be made. Second, the supernatural or scientific machinery had to be straightened out in order to explain the marvellous Ancient Ones &c. These things can't exist materially in the Massachusetts hills. My idea is to have the First Gate (accessible with Silver Key alone) open on an extension of the *Earth* only in all dimensions, while the ultimate Gate (accessible only through the Ancient Ones plus the

13. Price to Lovecraft, 1 January 1933.

14. Lovecraft to Price, 12 January 1933.

15. Price to Lovecraft, 10 March 1933.

16. Lovecraft to Price, 21 March 1933.

17. Lovecraft to Price, 6 April 1933.

Silver Key) brings one to a sort of space-focus where *everything in infinity* converges to oneness. This may not mean anything, seriously and mathematically considered, but it ought to pass muster in weird fiction. Anyway, it's the only reasonable means of getting around the problem inherent in the story as first sketched. This illustrates my belief that collaboration is *exactly twice as hard as original writing*. Creation is easy. It accomplishes itself: But to make all your events square with a previously existing plot--that is what I call *work*!

Point three concerns the problem of getting rid of the *schoolroom effect* inherent in the detailed development of the conic section theory of the cosmos. Clearly, a short story cannot devote practically a quarter of its length to academic dialectics--& this sort of thing ruins the fantastic atmosphere anyway. My solution--aside from expanding the whole tale so that this phase will occupy a smaller place (it really *can't* be a major climax . . . it simply isn't of the stuff of fictional climaxes)--is to *condense and de-technicalise* the geometrical part, yet with as little sacrifice of essential content as possible. I leave it to you how well or badly I've done it. If I've violated any important laws of mathematics, I'll leave it to you to set things right. But actually, I don't think the mathematical side is of paramount importance--since it involves paradox anyway.

For example--the idea of the members of a family line being all facets of the same ultimate entity is a bit tenuous when one considers the facts of descent. Suppose a cousin & I have a grandfather in common. Of whom--the cousin or myself or both--is that grandfather another facet? Is the cousin another facet of myself? . . . almost all the members of a race have some unknown ancestor in common. Is, then, a whole race--or perhaps all mankind--a multi-variated projection of a single archetype? In the story I have merely dodged this issue--but I bring it up to show that we cannot really expect 100% plausibility or serious science in this kind of phantasy. In my original S.K. I didn't bother about science at all--it was simply a study in mood. But do what you like about this phase.

The fourth point concerns the ending. I cannot get away from the idea of a certain anticlimax in having a [word unclear] *limited to terrestrial* mutation come out of this *prodigiously cosmic* story. Decidedly, Carter's journey ought to be somewhere *inconceivably remote* in time & space. Also--there ought to be no flaw (as the parchment-forgetting would imply) in the transmission. Let the loss of the parchment cover something else--preferably conditions of return. I have tried to solve this detail with care. Incidentally--your original climax about an incomplete time-transition would be excellent to use in another story with suitable preparatory framework.¹⁸

Lovecraft knew that a return made difficult by the anti-hero's flaw of assumed knowledge would be more powerful than pinning responsibility on the Archetype.

Point five . . . concerns *story value*. Clearly, the *fictionally big moment* of the tale is the *revelation in the room at New Orleans*, yet this is not sufficiently prepared for. Not enough is made of the setting, & the revelation is not, as it dramatically ought to be, the flowering of a gradual and well-proportioned growth. There ought to be a sort of anchoring of the reader's mind & interest in the New Orleans room, so that the climax--when it comes--will *mean more*. It can mean more only if the scene & characters are vivid in the mind of the reader. Accordingly I have laid the New Orleans foundation with much care, & have tried not to let the long Randolph Carter narrative wholly run away with it. I have let the bizarre room & its increasing tension be mentioned from time to time, & have thrown out threads (like the cosmic, coffin-shaped clock from Shamballah) which later figure in the climax. Then I have provided for a definite *scene* with climax-building events immediately preceding the final *crash*, so that the latter will appear to be the logical outcome of the whole tale, & a constituent part of an homogeneous fabric. Formerly, this crash had a suspicion of the extraneous in it, because it did not contribute to what was originally the major effect. The original story was primarily a tale of cosmic space. The collaboration is primarily a tale of a strange happening in New Orleans. Also contributing toward the climax is a heightened account of the Carter adventures just preceding the return to Earth, . . . an Earth up to the time of the Estate conference itself. Furthermore--I have thought it

18. Lovecraft to Price, 6 April 1933.

advantageous to strengthen the climax itself by adding incidents, bringing in the actual Silver Key, & changing the atmosphere of whimsicality to one of horror.

Now as for the style, "The Silver Key" was a symbolic, dreamy, quasi-psychic study of a mood--representing the final phase of my Dunsany-influenced period. It was not only non-intellectual but *anti-intellectual*; hence stood poles away from your dominantly intellectual cosmic study. How can the two be reconciled? Only compromise can turn the trick. It would be impossible to embody your subject-matter in a tale with the exact mood and style of "The Silver Key", hence I did not try to imitate that. I say 'imitate' because I myself have grown away from that light, half-playful Dunsany style in the years since '26. I could not write the S.K. today. But on the other hand, the style required moving *toward* the S.K. tone in order to avoid a rupture of homogeneity. The romantic-adventurous atmosphere, & the touches of pure didactic atmosphere, had to be supplanted by an atmosphere of vague soberness & directness, with a basically rhythmical prose as devoid as possible of stock romantic & scientific language, & with the tension of a dream hovering over everything. This, however, allowed the retention of many long passages in virtually your own language--for all of your flights of cosmic fancy were really superb. As a definite example of what I think the necessary *blurring of sharp outlines*, compare the two versions of the scene with the Ancient Ones on their pedestals.¹⁹

Lovecraft elongated the narrative, in part to accommodate the complexity of the mythic themes underlying the entire Carter experience.

Regarding length--the scope of the theme demanded what amounts to quasi-novelette form. As I said, the whole thing had to be expanded so that the schoolroom part might shrink to more modest proportions. The keynote must--so far as the Carter story is concerned--be one of breathless plunging from gulf to gulf--adventure and emotional turmoil--rather than one of static ideas. I have tried to let the moods of the cosmic plunging develop adequately, & to avoid the hurried, afterthought-like suggestion of extraneousness in the original . . . episode. If shortening is necessary, I'd suggest that it be applied to the more abstract in-the-gulf parts. The thing *could* be shortened. In case of a radical shortening you could omit the Ancient Ones, & let Carter come directly to grips with the lost identity sensation & with IT. Only one gate is really necessary. In preparing the opening, I have tried to make it acceptable to those who remember the S.K., & yet to let the tale be complete for those who have not seen or don't recall its predecessor.²⁰

Continuity was important to Lovecraft. This puts aside some doubt that may exist concerning any deliberate connection or growth between the tales. That Lovecraft would not negotiate, for length's sake, about the "lost identity" experience is also very telling. That incident is absolutely necessary to the anti-hero's apotheosis in the mythic quest.

The letter concludes:

Well, here it is, and do as you like with it. I fear it is not much of a commercial proposition--& you can let it lie dormant, without bothering to continue revision or to type it, if you choose. I hope I haven't let you down too badly. As I warned you, I'm a rotten hand at collaboration--but at least I've done my poor best. It occurs to me that this sequel leaves room for at least one more sequel . . . though Heaven forbid the dragging of poor Carter through a Tarzan-like series of forced adventures!²¹

Lovecraft felt finished with Carter. He did plant a germ in Price's brain, though not intentionally. Rather than inviting another collaborative effort, he was putting the quest to rest. To continue with Carter would be to threaten the integrity of what had already been written. Five days later Price replied with ovations and observed:

19. Lovecraft to Price, 6 April 1933.

20. Lovecraft to Price, 6 April 1933.

21. Lovecraft to Price, 6 April 1933.

You seem--thus far--to have blocked out a large portion of the strange life of a very strange man. I have the impression that Randolph Carter is a real person. It is that sense of reality at which I marvel. Doubtless I will in the end find some quibbling, somewhere. But the job is truly impressive. I wonder, betimes, whether we can sell it; and betimes I am content to continue calling it a sporting proposition; a piece of *amateur* work in the *true* sense of the word. My position as co-author has gone a-glimmering so far that my 'revision' becomes grotesque! Yet I can not resent that; only marvel at what you did with what I sent, and marvel also at my childish whim in thinking that I could really write a sequel to that story. I doubt that Klark-Ashton can add or detract; and this without any disrespect to our learned and capable colleague.²²

While transcribing the sequel from Lovecraft's handwriting to type, Price wrote:

Just transcribed your 9th page into 13th page of manuscript. Estimate on that basis makes complete story upward of 13000 words. The thing grows on one. I still can not say whether it would be a suitable gate crasher for the new fantasy book . . . and my opinion at the best would be worthless. Thus far I can not say whether I will suggest any revisions or not. Perhaps some minute irrelevancies will give me reason to howl a bit. Don't know yet. Now, in order to make it a popular number, let me suggest the following: A--Include a beautiful girrl. B--A hand to hand fight between Carter the Lord of the Void, using scimitars; C--A similar fight when Carter boards the light sheath to return to earth; D--A jiu-jitsu knife & pistol combat between Carter and Aspinwall, with Carter escaping just as the police enter. E--An incantation to restore Carter to the age of 24, and dashing across the river to Gretna with the B. Girrul. Marigny twisting his moustache & muttering about romance and moonlight. These, my dear Abdul, will make it a best seller. Understand, I do not insist! In fact . . . but were it not for your horrible experience with writers, I would remark that I am the guy that put the *Fe.* in irony.²³

The lettered comments show Price's humor; later comments indicate that there was serious advice beneath the tongue-in-cheek suggestions if the story were to be sold in the pulp market. Price's side of the correspondence continues with a postcard indicating the possibility of a sale to Farnsworth Wright.

The story is so much yours that even were I to . . . omit your name and peddle a modified version as my own--though with your full consent--it would be a fraudulent turn, simply because through a study of it I have learned that the subject matter is such that I could scarcely handle it, as my own, no matter how much wrenching I did and that if it is salable, it must be with your treatment, at the most I would make only minor revision, *if necessary*. It is not a story susceptible to my type of revision--unless we introduce some hand to hand fighting, a beautiful girl, etc. A treatment which I am sure you would relish! I very much prefer to keep the story in a form which you could grace with your name. I have done so little work on it that I doubt the propriety of having my name in the by-line, and I agree to that more out of deference to your scruples about offering a collaboration (?) as your own.²⁴

Whatever his personal motives, Price was determined that the piece see professional print.

Honestly, I want Randolph Carter sold to Wright; in many ways it is such an utterly strange work that it deserves publication, even though it hasn't a single hand to hand fight in it!²⁵

22. Price to Lovecraft, 11 April 1933.

23. Price to Lovecraft, 13 April 1933.

24. Price to Lovecraft, 28 April 1933.

25. Price to Lovecraft, 1 May 1933.

Another postcard two days later read: "Hope to close all work, including S.K., by end of week."²⁶ Lovecraft had earlier expressed doubt about the story's publishability, so it was important to Price to assure Lovecraft that the project was in progress.

Later in May, Price focused on textual details to be changed:

mention that charcoal is used as a means of igniting olibanum, myhrr, sandalwood, etc. If I misled you by seeming to claim that the tripod should contain *only* charcoal, my expression was grossly in error; my intent was, charcoal on which incense was tossed. In view of this, can you admit charcoal as a fuel?²⁷

Lovecraft responds with some indication of hope that Wright will buy the story. Given Lovecraft's refusal to concentrate on sales over the act of writing or the integrity of what is written, this tells us that the story was important to him.

Glad you received the notes on the Silver Key MS., & that you find my suggestions acceptable. As for the charcoal question--it's only a minor detail, & I don't care how it's managed as long as it allows the tripods to emit dense, engulfing fumes, & to continue emitting them for a considerable time. . . . Here's hoping King Pharnabozus may view our joint labours with a friendly eye--though there's no use in harbouring undue expectations.²⁸

Price makes the final comments about the charcoal.

As to the charcoal as fuel: A brazier of charcoal, once set going and if fairly well fed with a mild draft (produced by holes bored in the bottom) will cause the prodigious emission of fumes for the full length of the narrative (and therefore narration of action) of S.K. I am a past master of fumes, having often heaped charcoal fires with olibanum, myhrr, sandalwood. Had I not been sacked so soon, I would have experimented with copal gum also. Charcoal is the idea fuel on which to heap gums, fragrant woods, & incenses in general. I commend it without reserve. It is correct as to tradition.²⁹

That the two would spend a proportionately large amount of time on this detail indicates their intense insistence upon verisimilitude.

Price was not ready to send the piece until August. His cover letter to Wright is telling. He recognized the Carter tales as very connected; he fell slightly short of equating the piece with cosmic myth:

It is so much a Lovecraft story, and so little mine that it seems of all things the most natural to sit here and tell you . . . this is one of the most self consistent, carefully worked out pictures of the cosmos and hyperspace that I have ever read.

I find no loopholes; and the entire fantasy world of Randolph Carter is now completed. That strange, charming character who has from time to time wandered through *Weird Tales*, and was left in an ambiguous position in *THE SILVER KEY*, has now a more rounded history . . .³⁰

Rounded is a good adjective. The tale brings Carter round full circle. Price sensed the need for closure, as did Lovecraft when he picked up the project.

Wright rejected the story, though he did so very regretfully, on 17 August 1933. Price responded to Wright, and, convinced that it would not sell, he let the business rest.³¹ Of course, Lovecraft was not shattered. He wrote,

26. Price to Lovecraft, 3 May 1933.

27. Price to Lovecraft, 23 May 1933.

28. Lovecraft to Price, 30 May 1933.

29. Price to Lovecraft, 19 June 1933.

30. Price to Farnsworth Wright, 7 August 1933.

31. Price to F. Wright, 19 August 1933.

"For the present the water can rest so far as I'm concerned."³² Whether it would sell later or not, it had been done. Carter's career had been welded into a warped circle. His life was complete. This is completely clear when we consider Lovecraft's response to a renewed sequel initiative by Price, in 1934 [4 September, 25 October]. He wrote:

As for further news of Randolph Carter--I'm afraid that'll be darned hard to supply, unless you have special advices from Yaddith . . . or any of the places where a bird in his odd position would be likely to hang out! If I ever use him again, I fear it'll have to be in an especial way--with the mystical & dream elements emphasized, & with no technical mathematical skeleton to stick to. The idea you propose is infinitely clever, but it really ought to be developed by someone capable of appreciating the mathematical background. That is the only way it can really be spontaneous. To me, mathematics is a field too remote & abstract to form a basis for fictional imagination.

It will be easy enough to get Randolph back to Earth if he's needed--a bit of eulogizing on the final phase of the Silver Key sequel would turn the trick. But I have my doubts about the real value of a repeated character. Such a being tends to grow deplorably hackneyed unless one has a . . . line of development to put him through--as in a novel--or unless one keeps him as a very subordinate element in the different episodes. The more I look over my old stuff the more disgusted I get with it--& with my efforts as a writer.³³

In spite of his disgust, Lovecraft valued the piece, else he would not have reasserted authorial domain over Carter. Will Murray has examined the game of name-borrowing which eventually got out of hand between Lovecraft and various correspondents until Lovecraft lost thematic control of those elements.³⁴ Apparently he was determined not to do so with Carter.

The Carter quest moves through a novel and four tales. Without the final collaborative tale, the anti-hero's quest would not have been completed. The monomyth, rewritten with a modern tone, would have been fragmented. Lovecraft took a conception which, in the hands of its originator, might have become nothing more than standard pulp fare and reshaped it into the culminating stage of the anti-hero's quest.³⁵

32. Lovecraft to Price, 19 August 1933.

33. Lovecraft to Price, 31 October 1934.

34. Will Murray, "An Uncompromising Look at the Cthulhu Mythos," *Lovecraft Studies*, 5, no. 1 (1986).

35. I wish to acknowledge the meticulous and gracious advice offered by S. T. Joshi. It is appreciated.

Briefly Noted

Necronomicon Press has recently published *European Glimpses* (\$2.50), an essay ghost-written by Lovecraft in 1932 for his ex-wife Sonia Davis. This bizarre tract recounts, in the first person, Sonia's trip to England, France and Germany in the summer of 1932; Sonia presumably hoped to sell it to a magazine, but it has lain unpublished until this edition. Among other things, the essay recounts Sonia's attendance at a speech given by Hitler in Wiesbaden. The edition contains an introduction by S. T. Joshi.

The 23rd issue of the Finnish magazine *Portti Science Fiction* (Fall 1987) was devoted to Lovecraft. Among other things, it contains an article on Lovecraft and the Cthulhu Mythos by S. Albert Kivinen, a professor of philosophy at the University of Helsinki and Finland's leading Lovecraft authority; a translation of "The Haunter of the Dark"; and an article, "Marc Michaud, Necronomicon Press and H. P. Lovecraft", by Raimo Nikkonen. The issue can be purchased for \$4.00 (sea mail) from the editor, Raimo Nikkonen, Peltokatu 25-27 C 57, 33100 Tampere, Finland.

A Guide to the Lovecraft Fiction Manuscripts at the John Hay Library (part 2)

By S. T. Joshi

A. Works by Lovecraft Alone

26. "Of Evill Sorceries done in New-England of Daemons in no Humane Shape." A.Ms., 3 pp.

This is what Derleth included in the early pages of his "collaboration", *The Lurker at the Threshold* (1945). Derleth extensively altered (although also misread) the text to suit his plot. The A.Ms. is considerably revised and interlined, indicating a quite careful shaping of the archaic prose. The last page does not seem to connect with the first two, but is of the same general flavour; it largely bears a proposed title page for the volume, *Thaumaturgicall Prodigies in the New-English Canaan*, by the Rev. Ward Phillips, though also some fragments of prose.

27. "The Other Gods."

- a) A.Ms., 8 pp.
- b) T.Ms., 4 pp.

The A.Ms. is Lovecraft's original draft, written on the back of correspondence to him; the first page records the date of writing: "Aug. 14, 1921". The T.Ms. was probably prepared by Donald Wandrei, since it is quite accurate; it is slightly corrected by Lovecraft. *The Fantasy Fan* followed the T.Ms. when it published the tale (November 1933), making comparatively few errors (though making the stupendous mistake of misreading "the seven cryptical books of Hsan" [A.Ms., T.Ms.] as "the seven cryptical books of earth"). The *Weird Tales* appearance (October 1938) derives from the *Fantasy Fan* text, repeating its errors and making the usual alterations. The Arkham House editions derive from the *Weird Tales* text. The *True Supernatural Stories* appearance (October 1934) has not been seen, but may not be textually relevant, since it is clear that all other appearances derive ultimately from the *Fantasy Fan* text. *True Supernatural Stories* may have followed *The Fantasy Fan*, and *Weird Tales* may have followed *True Supernatural Stories*; or the latter may have followed the T.Ms., in which case *Weird Tales* could not have derived from it. In either case the *True Supernatural Stories* appearance does not seem central to the transmission of the text.

28. "Pickman's Model." T.Ms., 15 pp.

The T.Ms. was prepared by Lovecraft, and it was sent to *Weird Tales*, appearing in the issue for October 1927. The T.Ms. bears an alteration in pencil, where the name "Marlborough Street" has been changed to "Newbury Street". The hand is not Lovecraft's, and may be Barlow's. The change, moreover, was made after the *Weird Tales* appearance, since the original reading is retained there. Whether this change was made on Lovecraft's or Barlow's initiative is unclear; although it is unlikely that Barlow would have made the change of his own accord. The Arkham House editions, deriving from the revised T.Ms., bear the reading of "Newbury", and make comparatively few errors in the text.

29. "The Picture in the House." T.Ms., 7 pp.

The T.Ms. was not prepared by Lovecraft, and is in a wholly unfamiliar typeface. It must date both after the *National Amateur* (July 1919 [sic]) and the *Weird Tales* appearances, since it incorporates revisions made after both publications. It may possibly have been prepared by E. Hoffmann Price, who wished to reprint the tale in an anthology in the 1930s (cf. SL IV.112). Lovecraft may have prepared a T.Ms. from the *National Amateur* appearance and sent it to *Weird Tales*; this T.Ms. was apparently lost, and Lovecraft may have sent to Price the *National Amateur* text with the requisite revisions, so that Price could type the T.Ms. The T.Ms. is full of errors which Lovecraft did not correct, although there are still extensive corrections by him. The Arkham House editions derive from the T.Ms., hence contain all these errors plus others made by themselves. (The famous error in AH 1963--"Lopez" for "Lopez"--has been pointed out long ago.)

30. "The Quest of Iration." a) A.Ms., 14 pp.

- b) T.Ms., 8 pp.

The A.Ms. is Lovecraft's original draft, though not containing a great many revisions; it is written on the back of correspondence to him, and the last page records the date of writing: "Feby. 28, 1921". The T.Ms. is by Donald Wandrei (cf. SL II.211), and is quite accurate. It bears corrections by Lovecraft in pen. It was probably sent to *Weird Tales* by Derleth after Lovecraft's death, where it appeared in the issue for March 1939. The Arkham House editions derive from the T.Ms., hence are quite accurate.

31. "The Shadow over Innsmouth." a) A.Ms., [2] + 68 + [25] pp.

- b) T.Ms., [1] + 72 + [2] pp.

The A.Ms. is a pencil draft which Lovecraft declared to be the fourth draft of the work (cf. SL III.435-36). With the A.Ms. are two pages of notes, and other notes and additions are written on the backs of some of the pages of the text. Some pages of an earlier draft (published as "Discarded Draught: 'The Shadow over Innsmouth'") survive, since the revised draft was written on their versos; these include pp. 1-6, 17, and 21 of the earlier draft. A p. 15 is on the verso of one of the two pages of notes, but comparison reveals that it is a rough version of p. 15 of the final text. It may be, indeed, that part of this early draft was incorporated directly into the final draft, as some of the pages of the latter have been renumbered as if some parts of the text have been inserted here and there. The T.Ms. was in any case prepared by Lovecraft; both it and the A.Ms. record the date of completion on their respective last pages: "December 3, 1931". The T.Ms. (or a carbon of it) was apparently sent to William L. Crawford for the booklet which he printed in late 1936 (not April 1936, as the copyright page declares; cf. SL V.359), although Roy A. Squires--who discovered a partial carbon copy of a T.Ms. which was the actual printer's copy for the publication--feels that the T.Ms. and his carbon are not the same. The carbon copy has now been dispersed, as separate leaves were sold to collectors. It is extremely unlikely, however, that Lovecraft would have prepared a new T.Ms. or have had someone

else prepare it for him. In any case, the Arkham House editions derive from Crawford's booklet--or perhaps Lovecraft's corrected copy of it (John Hay Library). Lovecraft actually distributed several copies which he corrected in pencil, and Derleth and Wandrei may have obtained one of these. As usual, Lovecraft corrected only some obvious typographical errors. The errata sheet lists only a fraction of the errors in the book appearance.

32. "The Shunned House." T.Ms., 25 pp.

Recently a single-spaced T.Ms. of this novelette has turned up in the John Hay Library; it is not by Lovecraft nor in any other recognisable typeface. Although it has not been examined in detail, it probably is not original but derives from W. Paul Cook's abortive pamphlet. The original A.Ms. was given to Samuel Loveman (cf. Lovecraft to R. H. Barlow, 12 July 1934; ms., John Hay Library); and although Lovecraft believed that Loveman had misplaced it, Loveman declared owning the text well after Lovecraft's death (cf. Samuel Loveman to Winfield Townley Scott, 19 April 1944; ms., John Hay Library). The whereabouts of the A.Ms., now that Loveman had died, are unknown. No other ms. of the work has ever come to light. The Cook printing, however, is probably quite accurate; Cook was, in fact, the only one ever to print a Lovecraft story faultlessly: his printing of "The White Ship" (*The United Amateur*, November 1919) follows the T.Ms. down to the last comma and semicolon.

33. "The Silver Key." T.Ms., 14 pp.

The T.Ms. was prepared by Lovecraft, and was sent to *Weird Tales*, where it appeared (January 1929) with the usual editorial alterations. AH 1939 followed the T.Ms., hence its text is quite accurate; AH 1964 leaves out part of a sentence in the first paragraph which makes the whole passage sound contradictory, if not incoherent.

34. "The Statement of Randolph Carter." T.Ms., 4 pp.

This is another of Lovecraft's single-spaced T.Mss. sent to *Weird Tales* (not numbered at the top). An A.Ms. was discovered and published by R. Alain Everts (Madison, Wis.: The Strange Co., 1976); it is a clean copy of Lovecraft's original draft, but must date before the T.Ms., as the latter incorporates some revisions (which Everts believed to be errors in the printed texts). The T.Ms. was followed by Cook when he published the tale in *The Vagrant* (May 1920). *Weird Tales* also followed the T.Ms. (February 1925), and the Arkham House editions derive from the *Weird Tales* appearance. AH 1964 leaves out part of a paragraph (rightly pointed out by Everts), but it is included in AH 1939.

35. "The Strange High House in the Mist." A.Ms. and T.Ms., [1] + 10 pp.

The ms. is a strange compendium of the original autograph draft (pp. 1-7, 10) and a T.Ms. (pp. 8-9) extensively revised by Lovecraft in pen. The last page records the date of writing: "Novr. 9, 1926". The covering page of the ms. (written in a much later hand than the A.Ms. part of the text) declares that the story was to have been published in the second issue of *The Recluse*, and that the tale appeared in *Weird Tales* (October 1931). The ms. has been revised in pencil; some of these revisions must date after the *Weird Tales* appearance, since that publication prints those phrases in the text in their unrevised state. Arkham House editions derive from the *Weird Tales* text, hence do not incorporate these new revisions (of which there are comparatively few).

36. "Sweet Ermengarde; or, The Heart of a Country Girl." As by "Percy Simple". A.Ms., 10 pp.

The A.Ms. seems to be Lovecraft's original draft, but bears very few revisions: evidently he did not spend much time in polishing. The ms. is written on blank pages of stationery from the Edwin E. Phillips Refrigeration Co., Providence, R.I. There is no indication of the date of writing (nor does Lovecraft mention the farce in any correspondence seen by me), but the handwriting is comparatively

youthful, so that it probably dates to 1925 or before. The first appearance (AH 1943) followed the text accurately enough.

37. "The Terrible Old Man." A.Ms., 4 pp.

The ms. is a clean copy (the original A.Ms. is now in the possession of Arthur Koki; cf. his M.A. thesis, "H. P. Lovecraft: An Introduction to His Life and Writings", Columbia University, 1962). The last page records the date of writing: "Jany. 28, 1920". The existing A.Ms. must date after the first appearance (*The Tryout*, July 1921), since it incorporates a few revisions from that text. The *Weird Tales* text includes the revisions made in the A.Ms., but this may mean either that the A.Ms. was made before the *Weird Tales* appearance (in which case a T.Ms. would have been from the A.Ms.) or that the A.Ms. dates after the *Weird Tales* appearance and was copied from the hypothetical T.Ms. or from pages of *Weird Tales* themselves. There is little difference in either case, however, since the text of the A.Ms. is basically the same as that of *Weird Tales*.

38. "The Thing on the Doorstep."

- a) A.Ms., 37 pp.
- b) T.Ms., [2] + 28 pp.

The A.Ms. is Lovecraft's original draft, written in pencil; the last page records the date of writing: "Begun--Aug. 21, 1933 / Ended--Aug. 24, 1933". Lovecraft gave the A.Ms. to Duane Rimel (a presentation by Lovecraft in pen appears in the corner of the first page), but Rimel gave it to the John Hay Library in 1948. The T.Ms. (by an unknown hand: Lovecraft remarked that he had a "delinquent [revision] client [Hazel Heald?]" [SL IV.310] type the text) is none too accurate, changing Lovecraft's punctuation extensively, leaving out words and phrases, and confusing Lovecraft's chapter divisions of the story. The first covering page of the T.Ms. bears a "Circulation List" in pen by Lovecraft; the list of names here includes Clark Ashton Smith, Robert E. Howard, E. Hoffmann Price, August Derleth, Robert Bloch, J. Vernon Shea, Robert H. Barlow, F. Lee Baldwin, and Donald Wandrei (the last two are added with a typewriter).

The *Weird Tales* appearance (January 1937) followed the T.Ms.; the Arkham House editions also derive from the T.Ms., making still more errors.

39. "The Transition of Juan Romero."

- a) A.Ms., 10 pp.
- b) T.Ms., 9 pp. (2 copies)

The A.Ms. is a clean copy, though it is still in a youthful hand; this draft was probably recopied from the original draft before 1925. The last page bears the date of writing: "9/16/19". The T.Ms. (one a carbon of the other) were prepared by R. H. Barlow, and are somewhat inaccurate; though not as much as the Arkham House editions which derive from it. The first publication was in AH 1944, and later editions (e.g. AH 1965) derive from it.

40. "The Tree." T.Ms., 3 pp.

The T.Ms. is single-spaced (though not one of those sent to *Weird Tales* in 1923) and was prepared by Lovecraft. It was followed by the *Tryout* when the tale was published there (October 1921). Lovecraft's copy of the issue (John Hay Library) bears many corrections of the text in pen (cf. *Writings in The Tryout*, 1977, where a facsimile of the corrected *Tryout* text is printed). It appears that the Arkham House editions derive from this corrected copy, since they in large measure repeat those mistakes made in the *Tryout* appearance which were not corrected by Lovecraft. Nonetheless, the Arkham House texts are comparatively sound. The *Weird Tales* appearance (August 1938) is not relevant to the tale's textual history.

41. "What the Moon Brings." A.Ms., 3 pp.

The A.Ms. is Lovecraft's original draft, written in pencil on the back of correspondence to him. The last page bears the date of writing: "June 5, 1922". The tale does not bear a great many revisions and interlineations, indicating that Lovecraft wrote the prose-poem quickly (though not necessarily carelessly). The first appearance (*The National Amateur*, May 1923) derives from the A.Ms.

42. "The Whisperer in Darkness."

- a) A.Ms., 52 pp.
- b) T.Ms., [1] + 69 pp.

The A.Ms. is Lovecraft's original draft, written in pen and bearing some revision at a later time in pencil. It is written entirely on the back of correspondence to him. The last page records the date of writing: "Begun Providence, R.I. Feb'y. 24, 1930 / Provisionally finished Charleston, S.C., May 7, 1930 / Polishing completed Providence, R.I., Sept. 26, 1930". The T.Ms. was prepared by Lovecraft. It was sent to *Weird Tales*, where it appeared (August 1931) with the usual editorial changes. The Arkham House editions derive from the T.Ms., hence are--aside from a few curious errors--relatively accurate.

43. "The White Ship." T.Ms., 4 pp.

The T.Ms. is one of the single-spaced T.Mss. sent by Lovecraft to *Weird Tales* in 1923. Both the appearance there (March 1927) and the first appearance (*The United Amateur*, November 1919) derive from the T.Ms.; the latter, as remarked earlier, is word-for-word perfect with the T.Ms. The Arkham House editions derive from the *Weird Tales* text, which is rather less well printed. Stuart D. Schiff recently came into possession of an A.Ms. which he published in facsimile in *Whispers*, July 1974. The A.Ms. is a clean copy made in the 1930s for one of Lovecraft's correspondents. Lovecraft must have followed the T.Ms. (or *The United Amateur* appearance) in copying out the tale; and, aside from a few apparent scribal errors and omissions, makes some evidently wilful revisions, though these are of a very minor sort.

B. Revisions and Collaborations

1. "Collapsing Cosmoses." A.Ms., 3 pp.

The work is a collaboration between Lovecraft and Barlow, where each author wrote every other paragraph or so. The work is apparently incomplete.

Its first appearance was in *Leaves* (1938), which clearly followed the A.Ms., making few errors. All subsequent printings have followed the *Leaves* text. In my edition of the text in *Uncollected Prose and Poetry II* (1980) I have indicated precisely which portions were written by each author.

2. "Composite Story." A.Ms., [3] + 9 pp.

This is Lovecraft's segment of the round-robin tale, "The Challenge from Beyond". The text consists of three pages of notes and illustrations (first published in *Lovecraft Studies*, 3, No. 2 [Fall 1984] 72-73) and nine pages of text. Presumably Lovecraft prepared a T.Ms. and sent it to *Fantasy Magazine* for publication there (September 1935).

The *Fantasy Magazine* text does not follow the A.Ms. very well, deleting some words and phrases. Some of these deletions were corrected in a copy of *Fantasy Magazine* (John Hay Library). All subsequent appearances have followed the (uncorrected) *Fantasy Magazine* text.

3. "The Diary of Alonzo Typer." A.Ms., 20 pp.

The A.Ms. is written in a very late script with extremely small characters and many revisions and interlineations. The tale was ghost-written for William Lumley; Lumley's version survives, and examination of it proves that Lovecraft wholly recast the story, retaining only a few phrases of the original. It is probable that Lovecraft had Lumley prepare the T.Ms. (even though he states that he would prepare it himself; cf. Lovecraft to R. H. Barlow, 21 October 1935; ms., John Hay Library), since the first appearance (*Weird Tales*, February 1938) makes many curious errors which cannot well be attributed to editorial emendation. All subsequent appearances derive from the *Weird Tales* text.

4. "In the Walls of Eryx." T.ms., [2] + 45 pp.

The T.Ms. is one of two carbon copies made of the collaboration; the other carbon and the original T.Ms. (as well as the presumable A.Ms. by Lovecraft) are not to be found. The tale is credited to "Kenneth Sterling and H. P. Lovecraft"; and although it is clear that Lovecraft wrote most of it (though perhaps less so than in his other revisions and collaborations), it is probable that he himself recommended that the names be listed in this way. The T.Ms. is presumably by Sterling, since it is in a wholly unfamiliar typewriter face. The text appears to be fairly accurately copied from the theoretical A.Ms. It was sent to *Astounding Stories*, *Blue Book*, *The Argosy*, *Wonder Stories*, and possibly *Amazing Stories* (all these names, save the last, are crossed out on a covering page of the ms). Finally it was taken by *Weird Tales* for the October 1939 issue. The Arkham House editions derive from the T.Ms., and bear few divergences from it.

5. "Medusa's Coil." T.Ms., 48 pp.

The T.Ms. is presumably by Frank Belknap Long, working from a probable A.Ms. by Lovecraft. In some places Long does not appear to have been able to read Lovecraft's handwriting, and the text is garbled. Pp. 27-48 have been typed by another hand, probably R. H. Barlow; perhaps this copy was damaged or part of it was lost, and Barlow retyped it from a hypothetical carbon copy, as he seems to have done with "The Mound" (see below). Barlow has written on the top corner of the first page: "(Pencil additions & deletions by Derleth 1937)", referring to extensive changes in pencil on the ms. by August Derleth. These changes appear in all published versions of the story: *Weird Tales* (January 1939), *Marginalia* (1944), *The Curse of Yig* (1953), and AH 1970. Both *Marginalia* and AH 1970 followed *Weird Tales*, the former being slightly more accurate. I have not examined the *Curse of Yig* text, but it is irrelevant to the textual history of the tale, as AH 1970 does not derive from it.

6. "The Mound."

- a) T.Ms., 82 pp.
- b) T.Ms., [1] + 82 pp.

The somewhat complicated history of the tale's writing has been spelled out in my article, "Who Wrote 'The Mound'?" (*Nyctalops*, March 1977; rev. *Crypt of Cthulhu*, 2, No. 3 [Candlemas 1983] 27-29), where I conclude that the text was entirely ghost-written by Lovecraft for Zealia Bishop. The T.Ms. was presumably typed by Frank Belknap Long from Lovecraft's theoretical A.Ms.; Long seems to have done a better job of transcription here than in "Medusa's Coil". T.Ms. (b) is a carbon of T.Ms. (a), and has a cover sheet with the title "The Mound / Zealia Brown Bishop Reed" in Zealia Bishop's handwriting plus a lengthy note by R. H. Barlow (reproduced in my article). Many pages of (b) have been retyped by Barlow, either because they were lost or because Long discarded pages when

he abridged the story in an attempt to market it to the pulps. Long has added a few sentences to the ms. in pen at the top and bottom of various pages of T.Ms. (b) to provide links of continuity between the sections he omitted; these appear on pp. 15 (bottom), 17 (top), 19 (top), 21 (top), 25 (bottom), 27 (top), and 52 (top). Long accordingly renumbered the T.Ms. after he made the cuts so that it was 69 pp. All Long's handwritten additions have been deleted by Lovecraft and are now virtually impossible to read. Barlow has retyped pp. 1-4, 7-half of p. 13, 16, 18, 20, 26, 48-51, and 69. T.Ms. (b) also contains extensive alterations and deletions in pencil by August Derleth. This adulterated text was published (in abridged form) in *Weird Tales* for November 1940. The first complete appearance (AH 1943) derives from the altered T.Ms., while AH 1970 derives from AH 1943, though making many comical errors (e.g. "self-encrusted" for "salt-encrusted" and "Old Bones" for "Old Ones"). The text, as altered by Derleth, lacks about 250 words and contains many revisions in punctuation (some resulting in incoherency).

7. "Through the Gates of the Silver Key."
 - a) A.Ms., 34 pp.
 - b) T.Ms., [1] + 46 pp.

The A.Ms. is Lovecraft's original draft, written in pencil. The publication of Price's original sequel to "The Silver Key", titled by him "The Lord of Illusion" (*Crypt of Cthulhu*, 1, No. 10 [1982] 46-56) allows us to see precisely how much of Price's draft Lovecraft retained; there is more of Price in "Through the Gates of the Silver Key" than Price's own statements would have led one to believe. The T.Ms. is by Price, and bears many autograph notes by Price commenting on portions of the text. Price's T.Ms. is quite inaccurate, omitting words, phrases, and sentences from the original draft. Another T.Ms., incorporating the revisions made by Lovecraft on the existing T.Ms. based on Price's comments, must have been made by Price and sent to *Weird Tales* (where it appeared in the issue for July 1934), and probably more errors were made in the process. The Arkham House editions derive from the *Weird Tales* appearance. This tale ranks among the most misprinted of Lovecraft's works; Price arbitrarily changed much of the text, including important quotations from the *Necronomicon*.

8. "Till A' the Seas." T.Ms., 11 pp.

The T.Ms. was prepared by R. H. Barlow, and contains extensive revisions in pen by Lovecraft; some corrections in pen are also by Barlow, and were probably made prior to Lovecraft's revisions. Barlow has written on the top corner of the first page: "Second draft, with Lovecraft's corrections / final text". In the title "All" has been changed to "A", but this change may have been made by Barlow. Lovecraft has introduced the major section division ("II.") on p. vi. On p. ix (actually p. x, as Barlow has misnumbered the ms.) Barlow has added the date of composition: "Dec. 8-9-10 '34". Much of p. ix is in Barlow's handwriting; he has typed this up as p. x (actually xi), and Lovecraft has made extensive revisions. It is possible that this final page is what Barlow refers to as the "second draft", since the rest of the ms. seems to be a first draft on the type-writer, unless Barlow is referring to a hypothetical A.Ms. The first printing of the tale (*The Californian*, Summer 1935) is not very sound, but is much better than AH 1970, where Derleth attempted to follow the T.Ms. (perhaps because he did not even know of the *Californian* appearance).

The Hands of H. P. Lovecraft

By Robert H. Waugh

At the climax of "The Outsider" the unfortunate protagonist sees "a leering, abhorrent travesty on the human shape" and touching the hand of the monster feels between them "a cold and unyielding surface of polished glass" (I 51-52);¹ he is that thing in the mirror. This moment presents a paradigm of Lovecraft's most typical fiction: at the climax of these stories hands reach out; the narrators are part ghoul, part exhibitionist, part confidence-man, part dunce, and often nameless; and monstrous objects rise from water, in which the self is reflected or identified as travesty. In analyzing these elements we may be able to suggest what is truly fearful in the fiction.

Hands frequently carry the point in these stories. Almost the last words of an early tale, "Dagon", are "God, *that hand!*" (III 19). In "The Shadow over Innsmouth" the fingers of the citizens, "strikingly short", with "a tendency to curl closely into the huge palm", tell of their origin and home (I 314); and in "The Hound" the narrator knows he will die because the monster whose grave he has robbed still clutches the stolen amulet "in its gory, filthy claw" (III 178). All that is left of Wilbur Whateley are his face and hands, all that is human of him (I 176); and more horribly, Albert Wilmarth only realizes what has befallen Henry Akeley when he sees the perfect waxen copies of the man's face and hands (I 271). Like the Duchess of Malfi these are characters "Plagu'd in Art", even though the terrifying objects, for all the melodrama, "are but fram'd in wax" (4.1.134-35).² Their several hands, even their severed hands, lead lives of their own. It may be a silly point that in these tales shipboard hands often appear as supernumeraries, but the inadvertent pun does support the motif.

Frequently these hands either write or, worth a thousand words, in part because they must yet be handled in words, draw pictures. The manuscripts of "The Call of Cthulhu" carry the story forward significantly; and in describing the apparition of the monstrosity in the doorway, "poor Johansen's handwriting almost gave out" (I 152). Wilbur Whateley's diary, in his odd cipher, is important enough to be burned (I 198). But especially fearful is Professor Peaslee's recognition of his own calligraphy, his own hand, in that alien book written before the birth of humanity (I 433); and it is a pathetic moment when Dyer and Danforth find "an empty ink bottle" and "a broken fountain pen" (II 82). Various hands and calligraphies play a significant role in *The Case of Charles Dexter Ward*. I will only mention the importance of such volumes as the *Necronomicon*. Writing is often crucial in the stories.

Paintings and photographs also abound, sometimes as evidence as in "The Whisperer in Darkness". At the end of *The Case of Charles Dexter Ward* confirmation of the horror comes when Ward, that is to say Joseph Curwen, disintegrates to fine, bluish-grey dust "like his accursed picture a year before" (II 234). In "Pickman's Model" the recognition turns upon the painting that has been made of "a photograph from life" (I 25). The clumsy illustration of cannibals in "The Picture in the House" requires a similar authentication from "a small red spattering" that falls

1. The works cited may be found at the end of the essay.

2. In *Supernatural Horror in Literature* Lovecraft had spoken with approval of Webster's "horrible gruesomeness" (III 372).

from the second-floor abattoir (I 124). With either immense skill or a woeful ineptitude, attempting to trace a horror that still eludes words, colors, and Euclidean perspective, these hands belong to artists; and frequently an identity is established between these artists and the narrators of the tales.

But the narrators may be more than simply artists. They are ghouls, either actual or metaphoric. Whatever the narrator of "The Outsider" may originally be, by the end of the tale he rides with "friendly ghouls" (I 52). The protagonists of "The Hound" are grave-robbers, "neurotic virtuosi" (III 172), as is the magician they plunder. The narrator of "The Lurking Fear", rather like Wilcox in "The Call of Cthulhu", is a "connoisseur in horrors" (III 182). And ghouls are rife in *The Case of Charles Dexter Ward*. Metaphoric ghouls may be recognized in how often these narrators interest themselves in genealogical lore, like Ward, who was "an antiquarian from infancy" (II 109), or the young bicyclist in "The Picture in the House", or the poor gentleman of "The Shadow over Innsmouth", or even the surveyor for the reservoir in "The Colour out of Space". "Pickman's Model", however, is the classic development of the ghoul in Lovecraft's fiction. Not only does Pickman paint ghouls, he is himself a ghoul, as the derivation of the word, to take, to seize, suggests: pickman translates the Arabic ghoul. In *The Dream-Quest of Unknown Kadath*, of course, Pickman has become an actual ghoul (II 338); and he presides as a patron of the Miskatonic University Expedition to the Antarctic in its sponsor, the Nathaniel Derby Pickman Foundation, undoubtedly named for a relative (II 6). Lovecraft exhumed him repeatedly.

Not only are the narrators ghouls, feeding on the dead and on the expressions of the dead, on their vital salts and on their words, these narrators hardly make a secret of their own secrets. Though they deny any wish to speak out, they flaunt themselves in their secrets, often aggressively, for the secrets are the source of their pride. The man in "The Lurking Fear" boasts, "I, and I only, know what manner of fear lurked on that spectral and desolate mountain" (III 179), and the aesthete of "The Hound" seems to echo him, "I alone know why, and such is my knowledge that I am about to blow out my brains" (III 171). The secret frees the narrators from social restraints: Wilbur Whateley, who as well as Dr. Armitage could have been the narrator of "The Dunwich Horror", threatens, "It 'ud be a mortal sin to let a red-tape rule hold me up [from reading the forbidden *Necronomicon*]. . . . Maybe Harvard won't be so fussy as yew be" (I 171). Surely even the sober Dyer bears a chip on his shoulder when he remarks, "It is an unfortunate fact that relatively obscure men like myself and my associates, connected only with a small university, have little chance of making an impression where matters of a . . . highly controversial nature are concerned" (II 4).

Dyer must also strike us, as several of these narrators do, unjustly no doubt, as something of a confidence-man; for he asserts the authenticity of his photographs by admitting "the great lengths to which clever fakery can be carried" (II 3). Twice he insists upon his veracity in his monograph, which "will shortly appear in an official bulletin of Miskatonic University" (II 61); his narrative, as we have it, may be regarded as an advertisement for that forthcoming monograph, whose publication will remain eternally imminent. Pleasee exhibits a similar aggressive reticence: "It was . . . a frightful confirmation of all I had sought to dismiss as myth and dream. Mercifully there is no proof, for in my fright I lost the awesome object which would--if real and brought out of that noxious abyss--have formed irrefutable evidence" (I 369). It is, of course, difficult for anyone dealing in such materials to seem credible; it is no wonder that Thurston at one point believed that Wilcox "had been imposing" upon his grand-uncle (I 131).

This character of the bogus is not, however, confined to Lovecraft's narrators, but runs through other aspects of his work. It seems to me suggestive that behind a pseudonym that Lovecraft employed lurks Lewis Theobald of the "monster-breeding breast" (Pope, *The Dunciad Variorum* 1.106), the original king of the dunces (Boerem 36-39); years later in *The Dunciad* the whiff of plagiarism still hangs around him:

A past, vamp'd, futurc, old, reviv'd, new piece,
"Twixt Plautus, Fletcher, Shakespear, and Corneille,
Can make a Cibber, Tibbald, or Ozell. (1.284-286)

Abdul Alhazred, of course, was Lovecraft himself, a pseudonym he had adopted as a five-year-old in his first passion for *The Arabian Nights* (Lovecraft, SL I.122). It was in his essay on interplanetary fiction that he wrote, "We should work as if we were staging a hoax" (*Marginalia* 142). Even one of the figures central to his pantheon, Nyarlathotep, "was a kind of itinerant showman or lecturer who held forth in public halls . . . with his exhibitions" (SL I.161). As a mighty messenger in "The Whisperer in Darkness" he is invoked to "put on the semblance of men, the waxen mask and the robe that hides, and come down from the world of Seven Suns to mock" (I 226). The extreme of this forged quality are the shoggoths: "Formless protoplasm able to mock and reflect all forms and organs and processes--viscous agglutinations of bubbling-- . . . infinitely plastic and ductile--slaves of suggestion, builders of cities--more and more sullen, more and more intelligent, more and more amphibious, more and more imitative!" (II

95). It might be argued that the shoggoths are Lovecraft's most central invention. And in this light he is very American: questions of authenticity had plagued Poe, Melville, and Clemens in the nineteenth century and still persist in our literature. In any case, whether his narrators be ghouls, exhibitionists, pedants, hoaxers, or dunces, above all artists, it is a difficult group in which to repose confidence.

Finally we should notice that several of these narrators have no name. It might be argued that this device ensures the identification of the reader with the narrator; but that it is much more than a device is evident from its frequency and from the self-conscious way in which Lovecraft overtly probes it in "The Unnamable". In the short fiction and in the long fiction, "The Hound", "Dagon", "The Outsider", "Pickman's Model", "The Picture in the House", "The Colour out of Space", or "The Shadow over Innsmouth"—none of the protagonists of these tales have names. And in some stories the names prove to be ciphers, such as Delapore or de la Poer in "The Rats in the Wall" (I 26). It could as well be de la Peur, of the fear, and thus a mask rather than an identity. There is clearly a point in many of these stories where words will not operate, and this point is often referable to the narrators.

Many of these narrators seem to be bending over water at crucial moments in their stories, a rather odd detail if we consider how often it is the grave and earth-mould around which the classic horror story moves, unless the River Styx is more pervasive a myth than we realize. This element is clear in "Dagon" and "The Call of Cthulhu". In "The Hound" and "The Shadow out of Time" the narrators must cross the sea to discover the monstrous; and not only does Joseph Curwen traffic with the sea and marry the daughter of one of his captains, the first name of his antagonist, Dr. Marinus Bicknell Willett, identifies his marine antecedents. This story shares with "The Whisperer in Darkness" the motif of rivers pouring down ancient death, also present in *At the Mountains of Madness*. Wells figure prominently in "Pickman's Model", "The Colour out of Space", *The Case of Charles Dexter Ward*, and out of all proportion in the underground sea of *At the Mountains of Madness*, a remarkable detail in the Antarctic landscape; a slight but telling example is the well into which the empty, identifying locket is cast at the end of "Facts concerning the Late Arthur Jermy and His Family" (III 82). Lovecraft's most interesting variation on this theme, however, is the sea-marsh, the reason I believe "The Hound" is set in Holland, always threatened by the waters, and into which Innsmouth seems to be eternally crumbling and sagging. Even "The Dunwich Horror", which seems an exception to the pattern, is not, for Burleson has discovered that the name of the village is probably based upon a poem of Swinburne's, "By the North Sea", a paean to Death which concerns an English Dunwich that sank into the sea (7). Let us consider Swinburne's "Dedictory Epistle", which addresses "The dreary beauty, inhuman if not unearthly in its desolation, of the innumerable creeks and inlets, lined and paved with sea-flowers, which make of the salt marshes a fit and funeral setting . . . for the supreme desolation of the relics of Dunwich" (101); might this not be Innsmouth? Perhaps Lovecraft had been sensitized by Poe's treatment of the imagery and theme in "The City in the Sea". He had, of course, grown up by the sea. It seems to him the natural place into which all returns, even an inland Dunwich.

Several of these waters meet as mirrors. The narrator of "The Shadow over Innsmouth" recognizes his fate "that morning the mirror definitely told me I had acquired the *Innsmouth look*" (I 367). And the poor ghoul of "The Outsider" can play with his kind beside those old waters of the Nile (I 52), but the most significant water of that story is the implicit mirror, which at first he can not see. Lovecraft's entry in his *Commonplace Book* which may record the germ of "The Outsider" associates water and mirror explicitly (Joshi, *Lovecraft: Four Decades* 94). Thus Charles Dexter Ward, after his ancestor has broken the mirror of his portrait and come out, must appropriately become Charles Sinister Ward (II 158); and we may wonder, reconsidering the imagery at the end of "Dagon", what it is that the protagonist in fact sees: "*That hand! The window!*" (III 19).

These waters and mirrors are emblems both of the self and of the universe from which the self breaks off; as such a common emblem, the waters are random and infertile, salt waters, tainted wells, rivers of death, which represent the mechanistic materialism of Lovecraft's philosophic position (Joshi, *H. P. Lovecraft* 14). The waters mediate and divide the self and the universe, "wherein we have no part", as his essay on Supernatural Horror puts the case (III 366). Peripheral to that world, in our logical constructs and representations, in our cultures and moralities and arts, we are the abnormal; our "innermost biological heritage" (III 366), to which Lovecraft so often recurs, our exile from our origins in the waves, assures our monstrosity, in which we will always be pointed out, we will always be demonstrated, by an awful hand. In these stories we have to see "the things that float and flop about you and through you every moment" (III 96). And reflected in those waters we must be even less what we are. Ceaselessly questioning and authenticating ourselves, stepping back from ourselves and approaching ourselves, reaching out our hands, we are travesties. We are pastiche.

It is then no wonder that Lovecraft's fiction plays so frequently with the Double and with the narrator's complicity in and final identity with the monster. The ghoul robbing the ghoul in "The Hound", the complicity of

aesthete and Pickman, and the ecstatic degeneration of the narrators at the end of "The Shadow over Innsmouth", "The Rats in the Walls", and other tales are obvious examples. Such stories of possession as *The Case of Charles Dexter Ward*, or "The Shadow out of Time", or the remarkable one flesh of the marriage in "The Thing on the Doorstep" also come to mind. The grotesque imitation of Akley's hands and face is striking. And the last words of "The Dunwich Horror" have an especial plainiveness in suggesting Wilbur Whateley's failure, both as man and monster: "It was his twin brother, but it looked more like the father than he did" (I 198).

But we have to return to "The Outsider", an overt travesty of horrific materials, to face the full scope of this theme of imitation. In an overheated story, the manner of the penultimate paragraph, after the discovery of the self, is revealing: "Now I ride with the mocking and friendly ghouls on the night-wind, and play by day amongst the catacombs of Nephren-Ka in the sealed and unknown valley of Hadoth by the Nile. I know that light is not for me, save that of the moon over the rock tombs of Neb, nor any gaiety save the unnamed feasts of Nitokris" (I 52). This is the style so many critics have found unbearable. And though Lovecraft was capable of laughing at it while defending it, in such a story as "The Unnamable" (III 200-202) or *The Dream-Quest of Unknown Kadath* (Joshi, H. P. Lovecraft 62), we must still ask how he meant that style.

Peter Penzoldt has written that Lovecraft "was influenced by so many authors that one is often at a loss to decide what is really Lovecraft and what some half-conscious memory of the books he...read" (Joshi, *Lovecraft: Four Decades* 64). He has in fact several styles (Joshi, H. P. Lovecraft 62-65), which I would distinguish as the memoir, the documentary, the regional, and the fantastic. The memoir belongs to the first-person voice holding together most of his fictions, with such important exceptions as "The Dunwich Horror"; this is the voice of admonition, publicity, and justification. But there is no one tone to this voice. As several commentators have said, it changes during Lovecraft's career from the extravagant and fantastic to the meticulous, but is seldom purely one or the other. We have noted the extravagant in "The Outsider". An example of the meticulous is the description of the alien bodies in *At the Mountains of Madness*: "Six feet end to end, 3.5 feet central diameter, tapering to 1 foot at each end. Like a barrel with five bulging ridges in place of staves. Lateral breakages, as of thinnish stalks, are at equator in middle of these ridges" (II 20). This passage continues for another two pages, insistent on what is really there. This style shades off into the documentary, be it of diaries, letters, newspapers, paintings or photographs, and most extremely the garbled tapes of "The Whisperer in Darkness", in which a "feeble, fiendish buzzing" can be barely distinguished (I 227). Such is the transcription of the medieval hand in *The Case of Charles Dexter Ward* (II 219). If the words of the memoir are insufficient to describe the actual horror, the narrators have recourse to indelible records, albeit, as they confess, such evidence may be forged. The documentary shades off into the third style in several of the tales, the regional, often a dialectal record of such direct souls as the people of Dunwich, Ammi in "The Colour out of Space", or Zadok Allen in "The Shadow over Innsmouth". "Haow'd ye like to be livin' in a town like this, with everything a-rottin' an' a-dyin', an' boarded-up monsters crawlin' an' bleatin' an' hoppin' araoun'?" (I 339). Dialect is difficult to render, difficult to decipher, and sometimes as difficult and opaque to our literate proprieties as the words of the *Necronomicon*: "läl läl Cthulhu fhtagn! Ph'nglui mglw'nafh Cthulhu R'lyeh wgah-nagl fhtagn—" (I 337). How can we claim we pronounce the formulas properly? The regional thus shades off into the fantastic and the gorgeous hoax, those fragments from such documents as the Pnakotic Manuscripts or the *Book of Dzyan*, or such collaborations as the *De Vermis Mysteriis* introduced by Bloch, *Die Naussprechlichen Kulte* by Howard, or the *Cultes des Goules* by Derleth (Lauterbach, in Joshi, *Lovecraft: Four Decades* 96); the foreign languages are *de rigueur*. This style may remind us of the more extravagant passages in the memoirs, before the narrator's dissolution into fear, incoherence, and oblivion.

Lovecraft is a flexible author, with several styles, who can deploy his hand for several purposes. These styles shading into another form a wheel: from the extravaganza or care of a memoir, through documentaries, regionalisms, and fantasies, and thus back to the extravaganza. If any style has priority it would be the memoir, which it might be argued is the most made up, embracing and framing the others; but their relation might be more truly described as one of Chinese boxes, in which the smallest can enclose the largest. Each style is an attempt to deliver up the horror, to fix it in its essence, and each is a failure that *in extremis* seems a pastiche, perhaps even a hoax, for sometimes the style seems to say that it doesn't really mean it, that it is not serious. All these words seem mere copies and travesties, never the original horror; thus the quality of play arises that Cox and others have perceived in the writing (52). In "The Outsider" and so much else of Lovecraft's fiction, it is a play that by circling on a central horror at once distances and mediates it.

What is that horror? Human complicity in the unoriginal and inauthentic, our inability to be central or real to the universe: our being engrossed in the peripheral. To the climactic question of "The Thing on the Doorstep", "Who was this foul, stunted parody?" we must each answer we are (I 301). We are those "blind, voiceless, mindless gargoyles

whose soul is Nyarlathotep" ("Nyarlathotep", in Joshi, *H. P. Lovecraft* 33); for gargoyles gargle, like the rivers in *The Case of Charles Dexter Ward* and "The Whisperer in Darkness", pouring out waters from their mouths in waste noise. Our reflection, that our hand has set forth, only gives back a distortion, that which we fear there is nothing else. But Lovecraft, with his several styles that embody and refer to this inauthenticity, is in his fiction remorselessly inventive exploring the mirrors, in touching his reflection; and his is ours.

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Briefly Noted

In the 19th number (May 1988) of the *Owyhee Outpost* (a publication of the Owyhee Countee Historical Society) appears an article by Kenneth W. Faig, Jr., "Whipple V. Phillips and the Owyhee Land and Irrigation Company", giving a richly detailed history of the damming and irrigation company run by Lovecraft's grandfather. This significant addition to Lovecraft biography is copiously illustrated with photographs. The issue can be ordered by sending \$6.00 (\$5.00 per issue plus \$1.00 for postage) to the Owyhee County Museum, P.O. Box 67, Murphy, Idaho 83650.

Brett Rutherford has assembled a collection of his weird verse, *At Lovecraft's Grave*, which includes the long title poem, first published in *Lovecraft Studies* (Fall 1987). In the poem-cycle *Things Seen in Graveyards* there is a poem, "Swan Point, May 1987", recording Rutherford's impressions at Lovecraft's gravesite two months after the fiftieth anniversary of his death. This exquisitely typeset and printed book is published by Rutherford's Poet's Press; enquire at 255 Transit Street, Providence, RI 02906.

The Masks of Nothing

Notes toward a Possible Reading of Lovecraft

By Eduardo Haro Ibars

Translated by Marie Claire Cebrián

[The following is the introduction to *El sepulcro y otros relatos* (Madrid: Ediciones Jucar, 1974). It is one of the first Spanish critical articles on Lovecraft to be translated.--Ed.]

The recluse of Providence, Rhode Island, took nightly strolls and searched among the shadows for that of Edgar Allan Poe. The legend-weavers say that Lovecraft never went out during the day; in this way he avoided a reality that turned out to be much more dreadful (and perhaps it was) than his nightmares and blasphemous abominations: balanced between an exacerbated pride in his lineage and a profound inferiority complex, he avoided the company of mortals and took shelter among deathly things, among the larvae of his unconscious.

Coming from a strange tradition where we encounter Hawthorne, Cotton Mather--the inquisitor of New England--the Salem witches who he imagined were experts in abstruse mathematics, knowledgeable of infinite dimensions; descendant of the upper-class whores, the courteous galley slaves and the noble Puritans of the *Mayflower*, the first British settlers of the Americas; coming from that strange lineage, he hated his decadent time with all the vehemence that "the last of his line" is capable of. He wished that he lived in the impossible nostalgic eighteenth century; or probably, he wished he had never been born.

He was ugly, with a face like that of a goat or a fish; he hated the sea and everything that came from it, he hated cool air, the ringing of bells, he hated blacks, he hated. . . . One aspect of his character would be a long recounting of phobias and only two or three loves: he loved ice cream, the *Thousand and One Nights*, and his mother. A characteristic feature of Lovecraft was fear, fear that is derived from contempt or hate; not that pleasant fear of vampires and putrid corpses; that warm, dark terror that some of us like to wake up in the depths of our minds, but terror at the half-formed things that he has so well moulded into his tales. Lovecraft was an atheist and materialist, and that is why his fears were so poignant; he feared blacks and yellow "invaders" and the slaves of their land, he also feared gangsters, democrats, and above all himself; he, who was a pure decadent, was horrified at the decadence of American society, the "melting pot" and "bootlegging" that are the foundation of that strange culture and civilisation that has come to rule the world. And his fear was so great that it made him take refuge in the fungous jungles of his unconscious, and to extract from them brilliant black materials that masked the world; behind the gelatine masks of his pleasant "outside" monsters the foreign immigrants took refuge; and in entangled and tentacled worlds he concealed his own private life, his poor, failed lifestyle as a ghostwriter.

He was a moralist. He can be seen as a new Cato censuring ceaselessly what he considered the vices of his epoch; the ugliness of modern things, the degeneration of old customs, "jazz" and the collapse of America . . . He is like an old Roman horrified in the presence of the diabolical court of Nero-the-beast. His Apollinian spirit becomes

enraged before the triumph of Dionysus, which this time manifests itself in the aforementioned jazz, in the brilliant novels of F. Scott Fitzgerald, and in the immoderate and continuous use of the prohibited alcohol; this produces such horror in him that he prefers to see it as satanic orgies of viscous worshippers of the "Other Gods", foreign gods... He would have wished a rustic and provincial America, still dependent perhaps on England; with its forests populated by ghosts and friendly spectres; hills from which smoke rises up from Cotton Mather's bonfires where witches burn, instead of that human pestilence of the factories; and rivers that will transport remains of foreign, subterranean beings instead of soap and bleach.

He would have wished to go back into the past, to any past, to any other world... He was sick, of course; he was a pessimist or even more a nihilist; and it is impossible to determine if he was a pessimist because he lived in a horrible world, or if he thought it was horrible because of his pessimism. But this is irrelevant.

II

Creation--or, rather, reconstruction--begins from failure. Lovecraft's work is the chronicle of a defeat and a withdrawal; a chronicle masked as a puzzle, of a failure that proceeds at an individual level (Lovecraft, poor, unknown, with bad health and lack of love) and on a level of his class and social group--the impoverished aristocracy of New England. But in man's history everything adds up to failure; from birth (the expulsion from paradise) to death (the expulsion from a pleasant Hell), going through a thousand renunciations and weakenings daily. There are sane individuals--or those who are too insane--who make out of life a brilliant tragedy, an orgy of agonising screams and guffaws, a merciless and desperate fight against fate or necessity, twin gods; others write Ecclesiastes or the book of Job. But conformists mask their misery with triumphant tinsel, they walk like conquerors without noticing the leprosy that corrodes their bodies.

Only the dread of God--of any god--makes cathedrals possible, wonders of stone and light; only anguish engenders the work of Freud or the Bible; and only impotent fury and desperation make a man conceive the *Chants de Maldoror* or the music of Jimi Hendrix. And Joy is only the producer of beauty, when madness is aroused from the final affirmation of supreme and inevitable desperation; the beautiful joy, the atrocious joy of vengeance and death. Pessimism is the first step to Wisdom, but this can only be reached in the tragedy that is agony, struggle, frantic pleasure in the center of Horror itself.

The "heroes" of Lovecraft are tragic heroes persisting in a struggle they know will only end in madness or in death; they look for a knowledge that always leads to annihilation. They are usually cultured university professors, doctors or writers who--by chance (Chance is in Lovecraft the *deus ex machina*)--find themselves before a mystery that masquerades as a horror. Through dreams (messages of an unwitting archetype that brings man's mind to former epochs of history), through secret and damned volumes; tying loose ends, interpreting newspaper articles, childish fairy tales or old wives' tales--keys to the horrible reality that underlies everyday life--these detectives of tragedy find themselves suddenly before a cosmic menace that threatens their lives, and even the wisdom of the whole cosmos. The same knowledge that they have acquired reveals the inevitable catastrophe, the uselessness of any action before it, which is already foreseen in the blind course of fate and which will only at best delay it. Nevertheless, they try, they fight with a desperate scepticism. And everybody, or almost everybody, fails. There is no remedy, and they know it. They know that their fight is against the Universe, and that it is a mad and blind machine whose path it is impossible to oppose; that none of this monster's movements takes into account the existence of vile, ridiculous human obstacles; that the Fate that rules it is indifferent. And the struggle is a struggle without hate, because you cannot hate the Other Gods, or Nyarlathotep, the Crawling Chaos. How do you hate an earthquake, how do you hate the course of history?

Lovecraft's heroes are the anti-Job; that little Jew doesn't even think of fighting against the Being that tortures him, that immense, supreme being for whom the Leviathan is a graceful fish from the aquarium: he is convinced of the uselessness of all his efforts; he knows that he is nothing but a toy, something that is battled over between Jehovah and his phantasmagoric Adversary who also doesn't exist, except as a literary convention; many years have to pass before the Devil acquires a body, weight, and consistency. The tragic hero, Orestes, Oedipus, any of Lovecraft's characters--they also know the immensity of Destiny, from which nothing escapes, the inexorable Furies; nevertheless they struggle. Prophecies don't affect their conduct at all, nor the awareness of their final failure. And instead of accepting it like that wretched Jew, they affirm their destiny in the only possible way--by struggling. And when the Enemy is recognised, when the reality of an answer is given, they recognise themselves in the struggle; perhaps this is the key to the value of historic man, that is to say, the hero.

III

I believe it was Jacques Bergier, that bogus sorcerer who sometimes guessed correctly, who suggested that a comparative study be done of Lovecraft and Chesterton's works; Chesterton, according to Bergier, draws the universe as it should have been, while Lovecraft describes it as it is. In effect, in that world of horror, in that chaotic world in which monsters move all around us, we recognise--as in a dream that interprets itself transparently--our own world; terror could arise at any moment and in any place, monstrosity is latent behind any landscape--also in any human being. We could all be monsters, everything could be monstrous, alien. This is because we carry the alien inside our bodies; and of the various ways of exorcising it, the oldest one, basis of all magic, is calling it, making it manifest. Man gives names to things so as not to fear them; the chaos that manifests itself is not chaos anymore. That is why the Jewish God didn't have a name--or had one that couldn't be said, which is the same thing; because it was the sum of all the horrors of his people.

This is why Lovecraft, like his ancestors the Gnostics, established a precise and lengthy hierarchy of gods and devils--or rather, names of gods and devils--Earthly, Ancient, Primordial, Primitive, Other Gods, provided with well-known names of Egyptian or Asiatic resonance. And they are avatars, masks of Azathoth, the Demon-Sultan. He is a mad and idiotic god, a god that gnaws without end in the centre of the Universe which is himself, void of feeling; the principal divinity of Lovecraft, his "unmoved mover", is Nothing, a senseless Occurrence. And the Word of this God, his Spirit, Messenger, and mediator--the Hermes or Christ of this singular theology--is Nyarlathotep, the Crawling Chaos, the Chaos that moves like a serpent. Here Lovecraft remembered--or he remembered by means of that racial memory that puts man in contact with all myths--the Ophites who compared Christ with the Serpent of Genesis. Also from Gnostic sources is the idea of the creation of the human race, of the World itself, "by jest or mistake", which manifests itself frequently in his work; and the inclusion of man and the sphere of humanity in a non-anthropocentric cosmology that places him in one of the lower levels of the hierarchy. I see Lovecraft, like a modern Basilides, the product of a culture in decadence: in Basilides the splendours of the gentility conquered by Christianity came to an end, and in Lovecraft the proud splendour of "Old New World" ends, conquered by Roosevelt and Al Capone. These two pessimists project their vision of an "end of the race" onto the Universe, and they thus acquire a precise vision of existence as a never-ending thing.

The world is a mirror of a created work, a representation of him who transforms it by interpreting it, by that magic that it is called poetry. If I could imagine a Demiurge, it would be like a great paranoiac who interprets Nothing as his image and resemblance.

In contemporary literature, there have been various creators of entire cosmoses. Borges, Joyce, William Burroughs . . . and Lovecraft. That last has taken all fears, all frustrations that make yesterday's and today's man a sicker animal than ever before, and he has created with this scrap material his little opera of horrors. He has converted it into a popular narrative, a tale of horrible fairies, the anguished thoughts of Lautréamont, another atheist obsessed by Divinity, a modern Cervantes who criticised all things divine and human, in a bloody parody of the Gothic novels, the desperation of all the nihilists; from this comes his success amongst intellectuals. Who cares that his English is scarcely readable? That he accumulates unnecessary and clumsy adjectives? Who cares about his tricks, his recourse to the "indescribable" that, at the time it is being described, reveals an amazing lack of imagination? Who cares about his slow, erroneous, and tedious descriptions of architecture? In all this underlies a thought that modern man shares, and in spite of all his defects there exists a huge inner coherence that makes the work of this defeated man very powerful.

In this harsh world there are damned objects and frightful books that break the framework of fiction--but does there exist something more fictitious than the real, something more real than the imaginary?--and they penetrate to the sphere of daily life: the *Necronomicon*, the work of the Mad Arab Abdul Alhazred, has been so well conceived that it is frequently asked for in libraries and bookstores without ever having been written. And there already existed in the delirious California of the 1970s faithful cults to the Great Old One, to Yog-Sothoth, the One in All and All in One, and Shub-Niggurath, the frightful Goat with a Thousand Young. There are musical groups who are inspired by Lovecraft--one of them is called "H. P. Lovecraft"; another one, more modest, perhaps because it is Spanish, has called itself "Arkham" like the imaginary New England city Lovecraft sometimes uses in his narratives. And the music of Jimi Hendrix or Pink Floyd sometimes recalls the blasphemous rhythms and the ultra-earthly melodies played by the amorphous flutists of Azathoth. The city of Tlön sends its emissaries to our world, and old Borges, if he knew the phenomenon of Lovecraft, would surely have smiled.

For me it is almost impossible to present or to analyze Lovecraft seriously; I have been reading him since I was 13 years old, and I have about him a series of ideas that probably don't correspond to any objective reality: I could say that he forms part of my habitual interior landscape, like the mementos of the cities where I lived, like the faces of my oldest friends . . . And it does not interest me, nor do I think that it will prove very interesting for my readers, to give a lengthy biographical sketch of the gentleman of Providence. I will say that he was poor and sad. He was born almost with the century, and he suffered; his beloved epoch was the eighteenth century, but I assume that he would have hated that century in the same way he detested the twentieth century in America, because men who feel nostalgia for other times usually never find themselves happy in any time, in any place. His mother must have been a shrew, filled with social and racial prejudices; she insulted her son (he was very ugly) while she covered him with scarves; she was convinced that she belonged to an American aristocracy that never existed; and his father was a drunkard and he died a syphilitic. The childhood of HPL was lonely and sad, somewhat like that of Jervas Dudley, the hero of "The Tomb"; he walked alone, he read much, and he adored the gods of Ancient Greece. He married a woman who reminded him of his mother, and soon he left her because she reminded him of his mother. He always lived poorly, spent his time revising horror tales, he liked ice cream, he had many friends, almost all of them correspondents. He died young, of cancer of the intestine and of weariness. The rest is in his works.

Briefly Noted

Thekla Zachrau, a distinguished scholar of weird fiction, has written the first full-length German study of Lovecraft, *Mythos und Phantastik: Funktion und Struktur der Cthulhu-Mythologie in den phantastischen Erzählungen H. P. Lovecrafts* (*Myth and Fantastic Literature: The Function and Structure of the Cthulhu Mythology in the Fantastic Tales of H. P. Lovecraft*) (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1986; 60 Swiss francs). This wide-ranging study initially discusses the theory of myth (in the work of such theoreticians as Lévi-Strauss and Eliade), then the theory of the fantastic, then the application of both to the Lovecraft mythos. Zachrau is thoroughly familiar with both American and foreign writing about Lovecraft, and her primary and secondary bibliographies are impressive and up-to-date. This sustained treatment of Lovecraft merits translation into English.

The first two issues of *Etudes Lovecraftiennes*, a French version of *Lovecraft Studies*, has appeared. Edited by Joseph Altairac, the first issue contains French translations of Robert M. Price's "The Revision Mythos" (from issue #11), Will Murray's "Dagon in Puritan Massachusetts" (from issue #11), and Jason C. Eckhardt's "Behind the Mountains of Madness" (from issue #14), and the second issue features Will Murray's "An Uncompromising Look at the Cthulhu Mythos" (from issue #12) as well as the entire *Boiling Point* (Necronomicon Press: 1985) and an original French piece by François Riviere. Inquiries should be sent to Joseph Altairac, 57 rue de Stalingrad, 95120 Ermont, France.

Facts in the Case of "The Disinterment"

By Will Murray

Among H. P. Lovecraft's relatively small body of fiction is a subset of stories known collectively as his "revisions". Most of these are stories that Lovecraft ghost-wrote on order for would-be writers whose desire to see their names in print outweighed their talent and initiative. Put another way, they paid Lovecraft to write stories for them, often supplying a rough draft which Lovecraft, as often as not, would virtually discard. Sometimes Lovecraft only received a synopsis from which to work. Most of these ghost-written works were collected in the 1970 Arkham House volume, *The Horror in the Museum and Other Revisions*.

Although for the most part inferior to Lovecraft's undiluted work, so great is the interest in any fiction that dribbled from his pen, and so scanty his own creative canon, that this uneven collection of prose was greeted with enthusiasm by Lovecraft aficionados. As well it should have been. Much of its contents was linked thematically to Lovecraft's Cthulhu Mythos, and even the worst stories in the book--and it would be a hard choice to decide between "Medusa's Coil" and the likes of, say, "The Invisible Monster"--remain infinitely more entertaining than, to give the most telling example, Lovecraft's quasi-eighteenth-century poetry; although that body of work, too, has its adherents.

Since the publication of *The Horror in the Museum*, scholars have uncovered still more revisions. Nothing of great import has been unearthed--and probably won't be unless someone finds the phantom third Adolphe de Castro revision Lovecraft mentions in his letters--but some interesting specimens have turned up. And the thirst for Lovecraftiana remains, more than fifty years after his death, impossible to slake.

Some of these stories bear the byline of Duane W. Rimel, with whom Lovecraft corresponded in the 1930s just as he was tapering off from fictional endeavors and Rimel was just beginning his career.

In recent years it has been learned that "The Tree on the Hill", "The Sorcery of Aphlar", and the sonnet-cycle *Dreams of Yith* were all revised by Lovecraft, and these works have been dragged from the obscurity of old fanzines and other ephemeral publications for revaluation. As a whole, the Lovecraftian pickings in these stories have been leaner than in the previous known revisions. Small wonder, because for the most part the Rimel stories, as well as those by others, are *Weird Tales* rejects. They are entertaining, but not terribly polished. Nor are they, like much of the ghost-written revisions, full in dark allusions to the Mythos--never mind the wholesale borrowings and cross references which riddle the likes of "The Mound", which is the most elaborate Lovecraft revision known.

A prime example of this kind of revision story is "The Disinterment". Like the earlier revisions, and unlike some of the more recent discoveries, this one did appear in *Weird Tales*, in the January 1937 issue. It was Duane Rimel's first *Weird Tales* sale, as a matter of fact--although not his first fiction sale. He had sold a story to *Progressive Youth* only months before.

"The Disinterment" is a grisly little tale of an unnamed narrator who, upon contracting leprosy during a trip to the Orient, returns to his home in Hampton--the site of so many of Rimel's horror stories--where he cohabits with a shady physician named Marshall Andrews. This physician, seeing no hope in the face of the advancement of the incurable disease, offers the narrator a way out of his predicament. It is a way out no sane person would entertain, but the people whose experiences were recorded in the pages of the *Unique Magazine* could not be called wholly sane.

The solution is to inject the subject with a paralytic drug that induces the semblance of death, allowing him to be buried--unembalmed of course--and then, after a suitable interval, disinterred--for all intents and purposes cured.

And so the story proceeds in a dark and moody tone. I will not reveal the ending here; it is quite striking and nicely realized, but it climaxes when the unfortunate man, sensing that something has gone awry when he is at last revived, stumbles to his own grave in an effort to find final rest.

I first came upon this story a few years ago when I was combing old copies of *Weird Tales* looking to cull out a mix of stories suitable for a still-unpublished collection I was editing for Odyssey Publications. I was familiar with Duane Rimel's name because he was a Lovecraft correspondent of note, and also because at *Crypt of Cthulhu* old Duane Rimel stories were being reprinted on account of Lovecraft's revisory hand contained in them.

With the thought that here might be another Lovecraft revision, I read the story. It was quite good. Lovecraftian in the way that, say, "The Hound" or "The Outsider" were Lovecraftian. That is to say, it was remindful of Lovecraft by way of Edgar Allan Poe. Here and there were Lovecraftian prose touches--compound words like "night-black sleep" and "dream-orgy". But these could have been the creation of a writer who had absorbed the Lovecraftian style, as Rimel clearly did to a degree.

Because I knew that *Crypt of Cthulhu* editor Bob Price was in touch with Duane Rimel, I passed along my suspicions and asked Price to see if Rimel might confirm or dispel the possibility that Lovecraft had a hand in the story. Price said that he would. Months passed, and I heard through others that the story was to be published in Italy as by Duane Rimel and H. P. Lovecraft--or did Lovecraft's name come first? No matter.

When I wrote to Price, he apologized for not letting me know what had come of my inquiry and related that Rimel had confirmed my suspicion, but had also indicated that Lovecraft's involvement in "The Disinterment" was relatively minor.

And so that matter rested for a few years. I was content that my research had unearthed yet another Lovecraft revision--even if it is a very minor one. But in recent months, word had gotten to me that Duane Rimel had, in fact, backed off from his earlier statement to Bob Price and now said that "The Disinterment" contained very little Lovecraft prose at all.

Puzzled, I felt that there was only one way to settle the matter. And that was to plunge into the Lovecraft letters at Brown University's John Hay Library.

It proved a daunting task because of the crabbed and microscopic handwriting Lovecraft used in his last years, and ultimately I had to make two trips and enlist S. T. Joshi's familiarity with Lovecraft's penmanship in my decipherings. But our efforts did finally bear fruit.

The first mention of "The Disinterment" came in a letter Lovecraft wrote to Rimel on September 28, 1935:

First of all, let me congratulate you on the story. Really, it's *splendid*--one of your best so far! The suspense & atmosphere of dread are admirable, & the scenes are very vividly managed. I like the climax--& the note of indefiniteness as to *what thing* formed the substitute body of the hapless victim. That last touch was very skilfully managed. If Wright has a grain of sense left, this ought to be a sure-fire hit with him--but one can never tell.

Clearly Rimel's story met with Lovecraft's tacit approval as a fine piece of weird fiction. But Lovecraft's next lines reveal that his approval was not absolute:

I've gone over the MS. very carefully with a view to improving the smoothness of the prose style--& I hope you'll find the slight verbal changes acceptable. If the reason for any of these is not self-evident, don't hesitate to bring the matter up. This is a fine yarn, & you certainly have no reason to be dissatisfied with it. It is just as original as *any* weird yarn can be (you can see for yourself the wide difference between this dread-filled, atmospheric chronicle, with its hints of utterly unknown monstrosity, & the ordinary tale of transplantation, like Bassett Morgan's), & has a convincing cumulative power utterly lacking in anything which follows the pulp tradition. Don't fail to try it on Wright--even though he may be too dense & capricious to recognise its merit. I was vastly glad of the chance to read it, & shall look forward eagerly to its publication somewhere. Once more my sincerest congratulations!

In case there is any doubt as to which story Lovecraft is praising so effusively, the letter closes with the following:

Well--here's wishing you good luck in all your ventures . . . And once more, congratulations on "The Disinterment"--and thanks for letting me see it.

From that letter, one must conclude that "The Disinterment" was colored by H. P. Lovecraft's keen sensibilities. But the story does not end here.

A few months later, in a letter dated November 12, 1935, Lovecraft acknowledges that his concern over Farnsworth Wright's editorial insensitivity was correct. He wrote:

Sorry "The Disinterment" didn't land with Wright--but I honestly think he doesn't want *really weird* material these days. "Abstruse" . . . nonsense! Does the fellow want an explanatory chart with every story? No question but that he'd reject about anything of mine today. Well--there's nothing to do but keep trying. Sooner or later the small "fan" magazines will certainly be glad of any contribution of yours. And meanwhile there's no harm in letting Kline try his luck with anything he's willing to handle. He knows all sorts of markets that others overlook & has persuasive power with editors . . . Does he charge a fee even if he *doesn't* place a story? If not, you really ought to let him try "The Disinterment".

Evidently, Rimel took Lovecraft's advice, for, amazingly, a scant two months later, Rimel wrote to Lovecraft to report that not only had the story sold, but it had landed in *Weird Tales* after all! Lovecraft's letter of February 12, 1936, acknowledging this abrupt reversal of fortune, begins this way:

My delay in acknowledging yours of just a month ago, & in congratulating you upon the acceptance of "The Disinterment" (for which 3 cheers!!!) may perhaps be excused in view of the handicap under which I have been experiencing since early January--added to which I have had a most debilitating touch of gripe.

Well--congratulations afresh upon the beginning of your *Weird Tales* career! I shall watch for the story in the months to come--though right now I haven't had a chance to read the Jan. or Feb. issue! Hope the changes aren't too radical & flattening--it's at least fortunate that you could tinker with the text yourself instead of having an unsympathetic editor do it. Wright's insistence on diagram-like explanations is very discouraging to the serious weird writer.

It seems evident from the surviving side of the Lovecraft-Rimel exchange that Rimel undertook significant revisions of "The Disinterment" himself--probably coached by his agent, pulp writer Otis Adelbert Kline. This seems to have done the trick. Still, the speed at which the story was reaccepted is remarkable, even for the capricious Farnsworth Wright, who often rejected stories only to ask to consider them months or years later.

The fact that H. P. Lovecraft insinuated himself into the early draft of "The Disinterment" is clear from the September 1935 letter. But a question remains: did Lovecraft's revisions carry over into Rimel's final draft?

The answer to that would seem to be a qualified yes. There are Lovecraftian touches in this story consistent with his style. Specifically, the language and sentence structure is in places quite Lovecraftian. It is quite possible for Duane Rimel, for instance, to write a paragraph so evocative of "The Outsider" as this one:

It was on the evening following my half-recovery that the dreams began. I was tormented not only at night but during the day as well. I would awaken, screaming horribly, from some frightful nightmare I dared not think about outside the realm of sleep. These dreams consisted mainly of ghoulish things; graveyards at night, stalking corpses, and lost souls amid a chaos of blinding light and shadow. The terrible *reality* of the visions disturbed me most of all: It seemed that some *inside* influence was inducing the ghastly vistas of moonlit tombstones and endless catacombs of the restless dead. I could not place their source; and at the end of a week I was quite frantic with abominable thoughts which seemed to obtrude themselves upon my unwelcome consciousness.

But when the prose in compared to Rimel's earlier story, "The Forbidden Room", with its pulp-simple language and lack of vivid imagery, the difference is marked. Compare the above quote with the opening paragraph of "The Forbidden Room", which was written only a year before:

It is said that an old pirate once dwelt in Hampton; but why he chose that secluded and decadent village no one ever knew, for the place is many miles from the sea, hidden among the black hills. His motive has been interpreted in numerous ways. Some have said it was to escape the sight of the ocean which had been his home, while others have suggested that certain seamen might want to reckon with the aged pirate, were he to inhabit the haunts of a sailor. His name was Exer Jones; the name symbolized wealth; enormous, hidden fortunes, which, though none had ever seen them, formed part of the varied legend. When Jones is mentioned natives will point to a tall, three-story dwelling which, with one other, rises from amidst a mouldering group of hovels, and will explain to travelers who happen to stop at the decrepit hotel, that such was his house. But unless they know the visitor well, they will tell no more, for the people of Hampton do not like to have their stories ridiculed--as would certainly happen were they to tell all they know of Exer Jones.

Evocative of Lovecraft's best work, too, is the climax scene in "The Disinterment" wherein the narrator digs up his own grave until his nails are "useless, bleeding hooks", and writes:

When the sun has risen, I shall go to the ancient well beneath the old willow tree by the by the cemetery and cast my deformed *self* into it. No other man shall ever view this blasphemy which has survived life longer than it should have. I do not know what people will say when they see my disordered grave, but this will not trouble me if I can find oblivion from that which I beheld amidst the crumbling, moss-crusted stones of the hideous place.

I know now why Andrews was so secretive in his actions; so damnably gloating in his attitude toward me after my artificial death. He had meant me for a specimen all the time--a specimen of his greatest feat of surgery, his masterpiece of unclean witchery . . . an example of perverted artistry for him alone to see. Where Andrews obtained that *other* with which I lay accursed in this mouldering mansion I shall probably never know; but I am afraid that it was brought from Haiti along with his fiendish medicine. At least these long hairy arms and horrible short legs are alien to me . . . alien to all natural and sane laws of mankind. The thought that I shall be tortured with that *other* during the rest of my brief existence is another hell.

The climax brings to mind the first installment of "Herbert West--Reanimator", in which West's first successfully reanimated corpse returns to his own grave, digging at the mound in a futile effort to return to the soil from which West had salvaged him.

The examples cited above may not be pure Lovecraftian prose. But they seem--when compared with the Rimel's horror fiction published both before and after this story's composition--not fully Rimel, although without question "The Disinterment" is largely Rimel. Lovecraft's own letter suggests this. And even if Lovecraft's comments were calculated to minimize his alterations to avoid hurting Rimel's feelings, and the story contains more substantial rewriting, clearly "The Disinterment" is not one of Lovecraft's all-intrusive ghost writings. Rather, it is more in the manner of fiction edited by Lovecraft--but edited with a heavier hand than most editors might be expected to apply.

In the most absolute sense, "The Disinterment" is not a revision, nor the product of ghost-writing, but a sort of ghost collaboration with Lovecraft taking the part of an editor, and going beyond that role a bit, as a polisher. How much of a hand Lovecraft had in the final version of the story is something that perhaps Duane Rimel himself might not be able to fix with mathematical accuracy, but it is noticeable to the careful reader familiar with the works of both writers.

"The Disinterment" then is a long-neglected *Weird Tales* story of some note. On its own merits, it is, as Lovecraft said of it in 1935, vividly realized. But thanks to Lovecraft's friendly and helpful assistance, the modern reader will wish to read it because it reflects, subtly perhaps, the fine hand of a master weird story writer. But it should not be lumped with more famous revision stories. If the contents of *The Horror in the Museum* can be seen as a shabby annex to the edifice of H. P. Lovecraft's work, then these newly uncovered revisions--of which "The Disinterment" may be the finest example--might be described as the guest cottage.

Notes on Lovecraft's "The Bells": A Carillon

By Donald R. Burleson, Ph.D.

(Dedicated to Jacques Derrida)

H. P. Lovecraft's poem "The Bells" (text source A.M.s., John Hay Library, Brown University), number XIX in his *Fungi from Yuggoth* sequence, naturally recalls Poe's poem of the same title. Poe's poem of course is the ringing of bells; Poe captures the very sound in his lines. On a superficial level, Lovecraft's poem does not match this phonological display; the tone of the poem is unrelentingly dark, the clangour of the bells themselves not heard. But perhaps we pull the bell-pull with too little expectation, too little anticipation of joy.

Joy? one may ask--in a poem so sombre in mood and subject?

Yes, joy of a sort--the affirmational joy to be found in the play of language. Lovecraft's text, as is true of any worthy text, is a creature of language--of the sprawling web of polysemic signification in which the reader, more than the "author", creates text by reading, sometimes by willfully misreading, to open the mind to all that may be found and felt. Poe said it himself: the bells, for him, were "Keeping time, time, time, / In a kind of Runic rhyme", and "Runic" is the key word--language itself, the one great living mystery, is the key. In the stultifying terms of Plato, written language was of course the come-down of "true", present, spoken language; writing was language in ruins. For us, the joy is in the rune; the relics turned over by the delver's spade are not ruins but runes--they are vibrant, vital; they live. Virginia Woolf, in *Mrs. Dalloway*, says of the ringing of the clocktower bells, "The leaden circles dissolved in the air". For Lovecraft's bells, as much as Poe's, the circles are not leaden but laden--laden with labyrinthine linguistic charge and energy--and they dissolve not in the air, but in the heir, the heir to the text: the reader. We begin already.

Lovecraft's text is technically a sonnet, and the sonnet form enters from the beginning an oblique dance of signification with the subject of the bells--in French, *le sonnet* (sonnet), *la sonnette* (bell). The poem will ring; we will pull the bell-pull and wring out the sound. Language will ring out. *Langue!* It sounds the very tone of a bell.

"Year after year I heard that faint, far ringing / Of deep-toned bells on the black midnight wind. . . ." "Year"--Latin *annus*--oddly puts one in mind of *annulus*, ring: physical rings, rings to mark the years in a tree-trunk (year after year, ring after ring: we should answer this phone-allogical call, it might be for us), rings around a pebble in a pond, ringing, rings of sound in the air; not Virginia Woolf's leaden circles so much as leading circles that open the poem with ringing. The leading line is a bellwether, which, one notices, is a ringleader. Yet "faint" suggests "feint" or feigning--the bells described, heard by the poem's persona, are not necessarily the real bells of the text, the ringing of the text, though they contribute to its complex reverberations. The text has its own ringing, its own tones, its own bells--it is *belles lettres*. It enters into the play of language with warring significations; it waxes (as it were) bellicose with itself.

"Peals from no steeple I could ever find, / But strange, as if across some great void winging." With "peals", the music increases, grows stranger even than the music that the persona hears but cannot find. Self-referentially, describing its own machinations, the poem, eschewing conventional boundaries of sense, scuttles its spiderlegs out over the web of language and peals away, peels away layers of meaning, repeals the laws of rigid Socratic dialectic, appeals to us to listen and look. "Appealing" suggests appellation, naming, calling--the bells on the wind call to the persona, the bells of language call to the reader, the poem names itself with bells, titling and entitling itself. Appellation is apple-ation, fecundity; apples peel away as layers of signification do, apples are appealing, and the apple is the *pomme* (*poème*). It is in this case a *pomme-de-terreur*, and with this odd arrival at the image of the apple-peeling poe-tato, or poe-dido, or meaning seemingly *perdido* (Spanish: lost), we find that things have shifted from

sound to ground. But *terre* and *terreur* (that emotion that strikes one to the ground) go hand in hand. The poem courts fear, and not groundless fear at that; the ground—even without our having to go from "ground" to "grind" to "rind" to "peel" to "peal"—reverberates and gives back the sound of the bells, ringing from "no steeple [eye] could ever find", though eye and ear collaborate to find the ringing of the larger textual bells, the music of reading.

"I searched my dreams and memories for a clue,/And thought of all the chimes my visions carried. . . . Ah, dreams. Dreams and bells, dreams and sound. The French *rêve* (dream) puts us in mind of occasions of revelry, when bells ring, and thus reveals (revelling in the *rêve*-elation of) a subversive (and sub-verse-ive) reading of the text, whose described bells do not connote revelling. (The poem is a Bellerophon, a carrier of self-subversion.) Dreams and sound—compare the Spanish *sonar* (to sound, ring) and *soñar* (to dream). Make sound atill (adorned with tilde) and it becomes dream. One dreams asleep; one speaks of a "sound" sleep, one is told that dreams are necessary for a "sound" mind. One speaks of sounding, as done by a whale (Spanish *ballena*, a distant suggestion of bells): diving deep into the sea, the sea at poem's end, and sea of the unconscious, the place of dreams. Dreams, bells, sound, all echo with one another. Even in "carried" one thinks of a carillon of bells. And "chimes"—cymbals, symbols clashing; they are the Chimaera (engaged by the Bellerophon of textual self-conflict), the wild freedom of reading and making text, the forbidden freedom of the apple, the *pomme*, the *sonnette*, the ap-bell.

"Of quiet Innsmouth, where the white gulls tarried/Around an ancient spire that once I knew." Quiet? The text is anything but quiet itself; it jests with itself (a quiet joke) even in attributing quietness. Quiet, quietus, discharge from restraint: freedom again, freedom to see the text spill over and frolic, like gulls, old gull-friends beside the sea. (Alas, these gull-friends fly away, become beldames.) "Aronnd" brings us back around to circles, rings, ringings, from (we read, inspired) a spire, a steeple; the text is pro-fane, it feigns quietude while sneaking out into the field of signification to ring free. It demands a free reading there; in "once I knew" it wants one's eye new.

"Always perplexed I heard those far notes falling,/Till one March night the bleak rain splashing cold. . . ." The text itself is always perplexed, writhing with a turmoil of images, hearing its own "notes" falling, withholding from its persona the source of the bells while surrounding him with tintinnabulation. March--Mars, god of war (bellicosity again)—points up warring significations, sounds its notes as a *bellicum*, a bellowing signal for march into (textual) conflict. But the text has been marching thither from the beginning, marching in the rain but resisting being reined, letting the play of language reign.

"Beckoned me back through gateways of recalling/To elder towers where the mad clappers tolled." "Beckoned" suggests beacons, gestures, signs; indeed, to beckon is to deal in signs, to do what one does in writing and reading texts. Beacons--buoys, bell buoys afloat in the sea (the seeing) of signification. The text's images are bellboys carrying (carillonning) shifting burdens of sense from level to level. "Gateways"—portals--suggests, again, portage: bellboys. (A spoonerism on "gateways" gives "wait-gaze", a perfect description of the necessary attitude toward texts, whose "full" meanings are perpetually deferred, awaited, looked for; we wait, we gaze into the multiple gateways of the hall of mirrors that is language; we are always on the eve of plucking the apple.) "Recalling"—renaming, re-ringing, jangling the bells again. The polysemisms of language are "mad clappers" indeed, applauding (apple-lauding, celebrating and celebrating over the fecundity of) their own wildness in showing what is tolled and told.

"They tolled--but from the sunless tides that pour/Through sunken valleys on the sea's dead floor." Certainly, the bells have tolled and retolled and retold. Tidal imagery, besides mimicking the nature of sound, suggests "title" and naming and calling and recalling, bells ringing to proclaim themselves from the depths of the sea of mind and language. The "sea's dead floor", the depth of seeing, is hardly dead (though dead is bell-y up); its flora are the bell-shaped flowers (sea flow-ers) of sprouting signification, the belladonna and bellflower, the ring of posies (posers) growing (from seeds suggested by seeing) in abundance. On such a text, one never quite rings down the curtain, though flowers are thrown upon the stage.

The poem rings itself about with ringing. (After all, the sonnet, as a part of the *Fungi from Yuggoth* sequence, is fungous--not to mention fun-gous--porous, poer-ous; and toadstools grow in fairy rings.) No wonder the persona has trouble finding the steeple in which his dreams are steeped, the "steeple" from which his dream-sounds call; he is immersed in the ringing of bells. *C'est une belle chose*.

Someone will complain: this is crazy, one has to be something of a "dingaling" to read the text this way. But what is a "text", if not a prototext, a written invitation to recreation, an invitation to re-create text beyond the tyranny of its supposed boundaries? If such reading be a game--if the bells here are game-bells, gambles, gambols--then in playing (*jeu*) there is a condensation of the joyous (*joyeux*), the joy of reading, of reinscribing the text in the flickering quantum-field of language. The text lies open before us, awaiting the pull of the cord, a-weighting the cord, awaiting the chord. Who can say that the source of the reader's joy is not sound?

Review

EDWARD W. O'BRIEN, JR. *Insidious Garden: A Look at Horror Fiction*. Moshassuck Monograph Series: Number Two. Evanston, IL: Moshassuck Press (1111 Church Street #705, Evanston, IL 60201). 46pp. (O.P.; photocopy reprints only available at \$5.00.) Reviewed by S. T. Joshi.

This strange and charming booklet--the second issued by Kenneth W. Faig, one of the towering figures of Lovecraft scholarship--reprints an essay first appearing in *The Wanderer*, a national Catholic weekly. In this article Edward W. O'Brien, Jr. finds nearly all writers of horror fiction--especially Lovecraft, "the most dangerous of the macabre authors"--morally questionable because of their emphasis on death, decay, and the lack of salvation. Prefacing this short essay is a lengthy publisher's note by Faig, and since this actually takes up the majority of the booklet, it is fitting to comment on it.

Kenneth W. Faig's distinguished career as a student of Lovecraft's life needs no retelling to readers of these pages: his pioneering biographical work in the early 1970s has left an indelible mark on the field, and his recent resumption of activity can only be looked upon with joy and gratitude. There are still far too few intelligent commentators in our little domain. In Faig's meandering preface--focussing principally upon the two other important negative views of Lovecraft, those by Edmund Wilson and Colin Wilson--we perhaps do not learn much that is new, but the uninitiated reader will be treated to a wealth of interesting material, both biographical and critical. For me, some of the most charming parts of this long piece are the occasional ventures into unaffected autobiography: it is strangely fitting that we should know something of the man who has shed so much light on the man Lovecraft. There are certain peculiar errors here--Faig follows Colin Wilson in dating "The Picture in the House" by its publication date of 1924 rather than its date of composition (1920); and Lovecraft did not submit handwritten fair copies of his tales to Edwin Baird of *Weird Tales* in 1923, but single-spaced typescripts (still extant in the John Hay Library)--but on the whole his rambling, almost free-associationist style is as delightful a contrast to plodding academic scholarship as can be imagined.

As a secularist I shall try not to be unfair or unkind to Mr. O'Brien, although I confess I found his tract irksomely naive. Focussing upon "The Picture in the House", he concludes that Lovecraft wrote the story "to exploit our weaknesses for violence, horror, and depravity". This is nonsense. What Lovecraft was trying to do in this and all his other stories was *to express a world-view*. O'Brien vaguely realises this but doesn't want to admit it; or, rather, cannot bring himself to admit that that world-view--which has no place for God, and which depicts man as an insignificant atom lost in the vast vortices of space and time--has just as much validity as (indeed, to most intelligent persons nowadays, more validity than) his own Christian viewpoint. He concludes by calling the story "horrifying and untrue" (my emphasis)--but this is simply a rhetorical ploy by one who has already assumed the self-evident truth of the Christian world-view. Yes, Lovecraft did see the world as a pretty awful place, with justice an illusion, religion as a cheerful opiate, and nothing waiting for us after death save the bliss of utter oblivion. But perhaps this is in fact how things are--certainly all the evidence we can gather points to it. Given this view of life, Lovecraft was (if I may borrow the religionist's terminology) morally obligated to express it in his work. To have done otherwise would have been a sham and a pretence.

O'Brien is also somewhat naive in seeing any direct relationship between the reading of horror literature and pessimism, loss of faith, or anti-social behaviour. This is analogous to the right-wing view that watching pornography will automatically incite someone to rape and violence. Psychologists would have a much easier time of things if the relation of thought to action were as simple as that.

But what is important about O'Brien's work is that he sees Lovecraft as a powerful force not because of all the nasty horrors lurking in his work but precisely because he expresses a world-view effectively and emphatically. I am in fact constantly amazed at the many Christians of my acquaintance who can read Lovecraft with complete insouciance, unaware of how systematically he is dismantling their whole conception of the universe. O'Brien is at least consistent and perceptive enough to see beyond Lovecraft's liquescent horrors to the real horror--man's spiritual loneliness, helplessness, and purposelessness--at the core of his work.



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